Present Day Tendencies in Christian Legislation

Francis George Peabody

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PRESENT DAY PROBLEMS IN CHRISTIAN MORALS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A MANUAL FOR CONFESSORS

BEING A GUIDE TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE FOR THE USE OF PRIESTS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH

Crown 8vo, Cloth boards.
Price 7/- net.

LONDON
W. KNOTT, BROOKE STREET, HOLBORN, E.C.1

PRESENT DAY PROBLEMS IN CHRISTIAN MORALS

BY

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A. R. MOWBRAY & CO. LTD.
LONDON : 28 Margaret Street, Oxford Circus, W.1
OXFORD : 9 High Street
MILWAUKEE, U.S.A. : The Morehouse Publishing Co.

171.16
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68736

First impression, 1920

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TO THE

VENERABLE GEORGE L. H. GARDNER,

M.A., B.Mus.,

Archdeacon of Cheltenham,

This Volume

is Affectionately Dedicated.

PREFACE

THE contents of this volume are based upon a series of Articles contributed to the *Church Times* during the past eighteen months, and my thanks are due to the Editor for permission to use the material of these Articles. In almost every instance I have considerably added to the original treatment of the subject, and have been glad to avail myself of the space allowed me by the publishers of the book ; but even now I do not pretend to have dealt with the questions at all exhaustively, and am conscious of many defects in my presentation of them. My excuse must be that the many activities of a town parish afford few opportunities for that leisure which is essential to adequate treatment and exact presentation ; still, on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread, I send the volume out to be taken at its own worth.

The questions with which I have dealt are, in most cases, of so highly controversial a nature that I cannot hope that my readers will always be in perfect agreement with the views I have expressed. I can say, however, that I have honestly tried to approach each subject free from personal prejudice, and, after weighing the evidence on

both sides, to give a considered opinion; and where honest inquiry is the basis of research, opponents can safely agree to disagree, and to respect each other's opinion. The solutions I venture to offer to the various "problems" are, in the main, in agreement with the generally accepted teaching of Catholic moralists; but I have tried to present them in modern rather than in mediaeval dress. It is for this reason that I have taken as the subject of the Introduction "The Study of Moral Theology." I am aware that this will seem to appeal almost exclusively to the clerical reader, and my desire is to reach the Catholic laity as well; but I have hopes that the educated layman may find some interest in the study of the opinions of the eminent mediaeval moralists. S. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, enunciates many valuable moral principles which ought to be, but which are not prominent in our present social and economic problems.

On the question of Freemasonry I have arrived at a conclusion opposed to the teaching of Roman Catholic moralists, the reasons for this are given in the chapter itself; I thought at first of leaving it out of the volume altogether, but at the urgent request of a friend, who is a priest of the Roman Church, I decided to include it in the series. It may also have some interest as an illustration of the scholastic method of dealing with "cases of conscience."

Some explanation of the choice of the subjects dealt with may not be out of place here. They

are offered as *specimen* subjects of present-day interest drawn from many quarters of discussion in order to suggest how other problems, which might have been equally well selected, could be treated. It is not that these are offered as the only or necessarily the most pressing problems, but as illustrations of how such problems may be handled.

As far as possible I have tried to indicate the sources from which I have obtained information, but it has been my aim to avoid overburdening the book with foot-notes and references; such seem to be only out of place, and tiresome to the reader, in a volume which is intended to be a popular rather than a scholarly exposition of the questions with which it deals.

I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks to my friend the Rev. J. M. Lloyd Thomas for the kind help he has given in reading and correcting the proofs and for preparing the index; in giving this help he is, of course, not to be identified with the views expressed in the book.

FRANCIS G. BELTON.

Feast of Corpus Christi, 1920.

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Present Day Problems in Christian Morals

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The Study of Moral Theology

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THE term Moral Theology, as used in the Catholic schools, designates that part of the general scheme of Theology which is occupied with a scientific and orderly exposition of the ethical teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. Or, as defined more particularly by a modern Roman Catholic author, "It is that science which directs human actions according to the law of God, so that man may pursue his end, that is eternal life." Out of this definition of

Moral Theology several important considerations at once arise.

We notice, in the first place, that it is quite distinct from our modern so-called Scientific Ethics. The latter finds its counterpart in Catholic scholarship in what is called Moral Philosophy ; both rely upon the unaided human reasoning powers, and have as their object the determination of what may be considered right or wrong conduct, and what man must do in order to be naturally good. The reader who wishes to obtain some knowledge of the Moral Philosophy of the Catholic schools should read one or all of the following works :—*The Science of Ethics*, by the Rev. Michael Cronin, D.D. (2 vols., Dublin, 1909) ; *Moral Philosophy*, by the Rev. Joseph Rickaby (London, 1908) ; *The Principles of Moral Science*, by Professor McDonald (Dublin, 1910).

The outstanding characteristic of Scientific Ethics is the wide diversity of opinion expressed by the various writers thereon ; there seems to be no possibility of real agreement between the various schools of thought. This is well expressed by Sir Leslie Stephen—who always faces difficulties in a candid and fearless spirit —in his *Science of Ethics*. He says, " In one sense moralists are almost unanimous ; in another they are hopelessly discordant. They are unanimous in pronouncing certain classes of conduct to be right, and the opposite wrong. No moralist denies that cruelty, falsehood, and

intemperance are vicious, or that mercy, truth, and temperance are virtuous. . . . But if we turn from the matter to the form of morality; if instead of asking what actions are right or wrong, we ask, what is the essence of right or wrong? how do we know right from wrong? why should we seek the right and eschew the wrong? we are presented with the most contradictory answers; we find ourselves at once in that region of perpetual antinomies, where controversy is everlasting, and opposite theories seem to be equally self-evident to different minds."

In contrast to this, Catholic Moral Theology starts out from a definite platform. It takes for granted certain postulates which it is the business of Dogmatic Theology to prove, and which all persons who believe that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God will logically accept. With regard to the *matter* of morals, that is the question relating to the rightness or wrongness of human actions, the Catholic moralist appeals to the life and teaching of our Lord, and from them shapes a system of morals which, after it has received the authority of the Church, commands the obedience of the faithful. Respecting the *form* of morals, that is the question why certain human actions are right or wrong, his teaching is based upon man's relationship to God as his Creator and his last end.

From this it follows that Moral Theology is a distinct and independent science. The scope of it is clearly defined, it is a study of the ethical

teaching of Jesus Christ; its object is equally clear, it considers those moral actions the observation of which will lead man to ultimate perfection and eternal happiness. It is of the greatest importance for us to recognize this independent character of Moral Theology, and to realize that it is primarily a study of morals from the Christian standpoint, and *not* a means of training confessors or preachers. The specific needs of the confessor are provided for in such books as the *Homo Apostolicus* of S. Alphonsus Liguori, Gury's *Casus Conscientiae*, Schieler-Heuser's *Theory and Practice of the Confessional*, and above all in the various systems of casuistry. It goes without saying, of course, that casuistry is based upon Moral Theology and presupposes a knowledge of it, but nevertheless Moral Theology is a distinct and specific science. It is, perhaps, the failure to recognize this amongst ourselves that has led many good priests to despise, or at least to look down upon, the study of this science. They tell us either that they find little or no help for their ministry in the Sacrament of Penance from the text-books, or that they are repelled by the casuistry of the Roman Catholic theologians. It may be well to consider these objections in more detail.

Let us recognize frankly at the outset that there are some priests who are naturally well equipped, both mentally and spiritually, to act as confessors. There are born artists, musicians, and poets; such men paint, play, and

compose verses because they cannot help themselves, the power is within them, and it must have an outlet somewhere. So there are born preachers and confessors. Of the latter the Curé d'Ars is a striking example. He was a man of little learning but of great piety, and his confessional was crowded day in and day out. The special gift which constitutes a good confessor is the result of a combination of certain natural and supernatural qualities. Amongst the former one would certainly place first the quality of *sympathy*, that capacity for seeing things from another person's point of view, and of understanding their feelings in the matter. Hard upon this follows the quality of *moral judgement*; the ideal confessor is able to separate the wheat from the chaff, and at once to pick out the sin or difficulty which is troubling the penitent. And also he possesses an accurate *sense of proportion*; he instinctively sees sins, sorrows, doubts, and difficulties in their true perspective, and in a proper relationship to the other circumstances of the penitent's life.

The supernatural qualities of the ideal confessor may perhaps be summed up in a single phrase, his life is one vivid realization of the presence of God. Such a one is living in constant communion with his Lord and Master; to him the unseen is made visible; he walks in the clear light while those who come to him for guidance and direction are groping amidst the twilight shadows. A priest such as this cannot help

being a good confessor ; but I feel sure that the majority of priests who read this chapter will humbly admit, with the priest who writes it, that he is not such a man.

And yet, by reason of their divine vocation, the clergy are called upon not only to hear confessions and to aid penitents, but also to make public pronouncements upon the morality or otherwise of human actions. We need more and more to realize that the priest is, or ought to be, a moral expert. For if he is not, who is ? Are we to be contented to allow the faithful to get their teaching on moral values, say from such doubtful sources as the popular Press ? And we may be quite sure that if they do not get it from their clergy they will go to other sources for it ! We see this tendency constantly in evidence. For instance, many people will quote the opinion of their medical adviser as final. Alcohol has been prescribed maybe, or any further increase in the family forbidden ; so far so good, but it should be clearly understood that the doctor has no *locus standi* as to the morality of an action. He can tell his patient what is good or bad for his health, and that is all. It is for an expert in Christian morals to pass judgement as to whether the advice given is in accordance with the Christian code of morals ; there are things more precious than physical health and well-being, and if the doctor orders what is morally wrong it is the duty of the priest to rule against him. He knows his own work,

we presume, and if we know ours we are not only justified, but morally compelled to oppose him. He must stick to his own work, and an opinion on morals is no part of it, nor is he qualified to express one.

It is not likely that the stress here laid upon the authoritative position of the clergy as the teachers of Christian morals will be misunderstood, but it may be well to state that one would strongly repudiate the idea that the priest is the keeper of the conscience of his people ; his duty is to know what the Christian moral code enjoins, and to present it fearlessly and impartially to those who acknowledge its authority as binding upon themselves. Now it follows, when the main line of our argument is admitted, that it at once implies a grave responsibility. If it is demanded of a priest, by reason of his office, that he should be a moral expert, then he must qualify himself for that position. No mere dabbling in the subject, or worse still the use of an empirical judgement based upon what we are pleased to call sanctified common sense will suffice. We will refrain from discussing the sad lack of training supplied in our theological colleges, and the neglect of the study even of ethics, or moral philosophy, or ascetic theology amongst the clergy (signs are not wanting that there is a sincere desire to remedy these defects), and will simply ask the clerical reader one question. " Can we afford, our position and vocation being what they are, to neglect the study of Moral

Theology, and to trust to an empirical judgement concerning, not ourselves only, but those precious souls which have been committed to our pastoral care by Almighty God Himself?"

After this brief sketch of the scope and object of Moral Theology we are in a position to consider the distinction which exists between it and casuistry. What do we mean by casuistry? Casuistry may be defined quite simply as the study of cases of conscience, with the object of determining whether in a particular case an action may be done without sin or not. In casuistry we apply the general principles of Moral Theology in practice, and thus it is a natural development from the science of Moral Theology. It is only fair to note in passing that modern Scientific Ethics, generally speaking, will have nothing to do with casuistry;[1] according to a recent writer it "is necessarily a source of fallacy and sophistry." The same writer defines the function of Ethics as follows: "The function of Ethics is to understand the nature of good and evil conduct, but not to take command of individual lives. It does not lay down general laws from which, by deduc-

[1] Dr. Hastings Rashdall, in his *Theory of Good and Evil*, devotes a chapter to the place of casuistry in Ethics which is well worth reading (Vol. II, p. 414, et seq.). He criticizes Mr. Bradley's attack on casuistry, and holds that many of the common objections to casuistry are untenable, and are largely due "to its association with the Confessional and the immoral system of Probabilism."

tive process, the rightness of particular pieces of conduct in particular situations can be derived." Since modern ethical writers have not yet, on their own admission, settled what is the nature of good and evil conduct, it is perhaps as well that they should ignore casuistry.

But, rightly or wrongly, Moral Theology does find a place for it, and endeavours to apply general principles to particular cases. Dr. Hogan, in his very interesting volume *Clerical Studies*, points out that casuistry is by no means confined to moral science, but that it is the natural outcome of all legislation. "Wherever there is a code," he says, "casuistry of a kindred kind grows up around it. The numberless decisions, for instance, of the Congregation of Rites are the casuistry of liturgy. The very laws of good breeding give birth to a casuistry of etiquette. Indeed, most of what is called law is scarce anything but casuistry. Until the period of its codification under the Emperor Justinian the Roman Law was little more than a collection of cases and individual decisions, subsequently made into rules. Canon Law was built exactly in the same fashion ; that is, on pontifical rulings given on single cases. So also the common law of England, which, different from the statute law made by legislative enactments, rests entirely on the rulings of law courts and the opinions of eminent lawyers regarding single cases submitted to them."

The casuistic method in the treatment of Moral Theology came into prominence towards

the end of the sixteenth century, that is, it followed close on the Council of Trent and the counter-reformation. It is, of course, to be found in scholastic writers long before this date, but it assumed a new significance then owing to the development of the doctrine of probabilism. This period was critical, in more ways than one, in the history of the Roman Catholic Church ; times of great upheaval and crisis produce new conditions and new needs, and these have to be faced, attended to, and, if possible, satisfied. We need to bear this in mind in trying to appraise, without prejudice and at its true value, the work of the casuists of this period ; we must also remember that the general state of morals in Europe was deplorably low at that time. No one who has studied the authors of the period will attempt to deny that extravagant and even harmful doctrines were put forward by certain writers ; mistakes are always made by pioneers, and the casuistic method in the treatment of Moral Theology has its own pitfalls. As Dr. Koch says, in his *Handbook of Moral Theology* (Vol. I, p. 37), " It [the casuistic method] embraces only a narrow sector of life, and appraises human conduct mainly from the external, judicial, and legal point of view ; and hence easily leads either to excessive rigorism or undue laxity." Still, I think it true to say that the casuists were facing in a serious and God-fearing spirit the grave and special problems of their day. They saw men

living slack and immoral lives, thousands were alienated from the Faith, and they did their best to reconcile these wanderers from the fold. If they made mistakes in their efforts they ought not to be judged too harshly, and still less should all casuistry be condemned for all time as wrong or futile.

The guilt of much of the misunderstanding of the teachings of the casuists must be laid at the door of that brilliant, but grossly unfair, writer, Blaise Pascal. Pascal was a convinced Jansenist, and as such was an uncompromising rigorist on moral questions. His charming literary style, his fascinating and cruel irony, captivated not only the popular mind, but that of the intellectuals as well. The consequence is that the opinion held by our English moralists concerning the great post-Tridentine casuists—until quite recently, at any rate—has been taken entirely from the *Provincial Letters*. This is well illustrated by the article on "Casuistry" in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (in the present edition the article is entirely rewritten, and by a different author): the influence of Pascal is unmistakable. Indeed, to one who has studied some of the casuists criticized and condemned, it is difficult to believe that the writer of the article in question had any first-hand knowledge of them. We must remember in reading Pascal (and all interested in the subject should read him) that his criticism is entirely lacking in proportion. He singles out the

opinions of individual writers who are inclined to lax views—as, for example, Père Bauny, *auctor nimis benignus* as he is described by Prümmer in the Bibliography of his *Manuale Theologiae Moralis* — and gives them a prominence they never had amongst the best scholars of their day. Also it is necessary to remind readers that many of the opinions against which he rails were condemned by subsequent Popes, and are consequently not now allowed to be maintained.

It is hoped that what has already been said about the scope of Moral Theology and the functions of casuistry will have helped in some degree to remove certain difficulties which we all feel to be present when we first approach the study of this science. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to an examination of other difficulties ; and, in conclusion, an attempt will be made to offer some suggestions as to how we may best get a working knowledge of our subject.

We may pass over, almost without comment, the fact that he who is going to make a serious study of Moral Theology must be prepared to do the greater part of his reading in Latin, and that because the difficulty is by no means unsurmountable. Even those of us who have allowed our Latin to "rust" since our University days know sufficient of the language to get along quite comfortably after we have become accustomed to the somewhat cramped style of the scholastics.

Our real initial difficulty is that we have to study our science outside the environment in which it has to a large extent developed—the Roman Catholic schools of theology. We are much in the same position as a country youth who tries to teach himself biology; he will no doubt waste much time in collecting useless specimens, and reading unimportant and irrelevant things; but if he perseveres he will win through in the end. A few words of timely advice from a Professor of Biology, a few weeks in a properly-organized laboratory, would save him much labour; but that is just what he cannot have, so he has to make the best of the existing opportunities. So it is with us; owing to the lack of professorial guidance we must needs be self-taught; and, no doubt, this great disadvantage has been the cause of many a priest throwing up his study of the subject after a few weeks of seemingly futile reading. But the position has also its advantages; it at least forces us to inquire and think for ourselves, if we hope to attain to any success.

In view of this initial difficulty it may be well, before going on to consider any particular scheme of study, to indicate the general method employed by the authors; for it is of primary importance that the student should be able to distinguish what are the essential elements of the science, which must be thoroughly mastered, and those matters which are of secondary importance. Fortunately for us the modern text-books are

almost all based upon the same model, they follow the general arrangement used in that monumental work the *Theologia Moralis* of S. Alphonsus Liguori. Let us, then, make a brief analysis of the contents of a typical text-book, and try to estimate the relative importance of such contents. The first part of the whole work is occupied with an examination of the first principles upon which the science of Moral Theology is built. This section is of the greatest importance, and should be studied again and again until its contents are thoroughly mastered. Experience shows that the tendency with many priests is to skip this part as rather dull, and to dip into the casuistic rulings given in the parts dealing with the Decalogue and the Sacraments. But this is to put the cart before the horse, and no real progress is possible by this method of procedure.

The first principles of the science are discussed in five tractates. If the order observed by S. Alphonsus is strictly followed the first of these will deal with the conscience. Its importance can hardly be overestimated, and the confessor, as well as the student, will obtain much help from a careful study of the chapters dealing with the erroneous, doubtful, and scrupulous conscience. The thorough-going student will not neglect, while reading this part of his subject, to study the long but interesting chapters devoted to the conscience in Bishop Jeremy Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium*. We meet with

a difficulty when we come to the chapter on the "probable conscience," in which the system of probabilism is set forth and discussed. The whole question of probabilism has been much misunderstood and exaggerated by writers antagonistic to the Roman moralists; it is, after all, much restricted in its application. It will be safe for us to leave future writers to decide how far probabilism, as a system, can find any place with us.

The second tractate is on laws. The different laws, divine, human, and ecclesiastical, are discussed as well as the promulgation, interpretation, and obligation of the various kinds of law. We have here to face the distinctive Roman Catholic conception that the Pope is the origin and source of all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and to recognize that what is said from this point of view does not apply to our conditions. Once more the *Ductor Dubitantium* may be consulted to supplement our main reading in this section, and also in the one which follows.

The third tractate, which deals with human acts, is invaluable, and may be made the basis of much extended reading and research on such questions as free will, duty, and the responsibility of the agent.[1]

[1] It would be beyond the scope of this treatise to give detailed references to the literature dealing with the free will controversy. I should like, however, to draw the reader's attention to the chapter on "The Freedom of the Will" in Dr. J. H. Hyslop's *Elements of Ethics*, and to that on "The

Sin is the subject dealt with in the next tractate. It is also of supreme importance, and amongst other things the student must satisfy himself that he has grasped the distinction made therein between mortal and venial sin. Here again is another opportunity for extended reading at a later date if one wishes to specialize, and the Catholic student may set himself the useful task of criticizing the conceptions of wrongdoing formulated by evolutionary ethics and modern psychology.

The last tractate of the first part deals with the virtues, and it will be interesting to compare the Catholic conception of the virtues with that of the ancient classical writers and the various modern ethical systems.

The second part of the whole treatise embraces the precepts of the Decalogue, and of the Church. It is subdivided into three sections—(*a*) a thesis upon the theological virtues, (*b*) a detailed consideration of the Decalogue, and (*c*) on the precepts of the Church. The third part of the whole work treats of the Sacraments. The difficulty the student will experience here is in discriminating between what concerns him as a priest of

Dilemma of Determinism" in William James' *Will to Believe*. Professor Sidgwick's treatment of the subject in his *Methods of Ethics*, Book I, Chap. V, ought not to be missed. The following references may also be of use:—Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III. Mackenzie: *Manual of Ethics*, Chap. VIII. Leslie Stephen: *Science of Ethics*, Chap. VII. Martineau: *Study of Religion*, Vol. II, Book III, Chap. II.

Ecclesia Anglicana and what does not. The Sacrament of Matrimony receives detailed consideration, and a study of it will no doubt convince the reader of the crying need for a good treatise *De Matrimonio* written from the ecclesiastical and legalist standpoint by one of our own theologians. The whole book concludes with a fourth part, in which is discussed the obligations peculiar to various states of life.

We will conclude this chapter with a brief consideration of a general scheme of study, and what follows is written in the hope that the reader may benefit in the future from the mistakes made by the writer in the past.

Since we have no Anglican text-book on Moral Theology the would-be student, under present conditions, must be self-taught; so it is suggested that before reading any text-book on Moral Theology he should lay a solid foundation by obtaining a thorough grip of the *prima* and *secunda secundae* of the *Summa Theologica* of S. Thomas Aquinas. The teaching of S. Thomas is the basis upon which all Christian moral science is built. If a translation is desired to compare with the original Latin text there is an excellent one by the Dominican Fathers, published by Messrs. Washbourne & Co. During this period also the student would do well to read some book on general ethics. For this purpose *The Elements of Ethics*, by Professor J. H. Muirhead, is recommended; it is published by Murray

in the University Extension Manuals. The reading of this work will show him the ethical problems which are engaging the attention of modern scholars, and may provide material for extended reading and research in the future.

Also, at least some elementary knowledge of the principles of modern psychology is most desirable, as this science seems likely to exercise an ever-increasing influence upon Ethics and Moral Philosophy. Detailed references are impossible, but I would recommend Dr. McDougall's *Psychology, the Study of Behaviour* (Home University Library) as an introduction to the subject ; and Professor James Ward's *Psychological Principles* (Cambridge University Press) for more advanced study. Those who would like to examine the Roman Catholic view of the subject will find Father Michael Maher's *Psychology* (Stonyhurst Philosophical Series) both interesting and useful. Then, again, time would not be wasted if the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle were read—if this has not already been done in undergraduate days —as S. Thomas uses it not a little. The best English commentary on the Ethics with text is John Burnet's *The Ethics of Aristotle* (Methuen, 1900) ; it contains the Eudemian as well as the Nicomachean text. Besides this there is Stewart's *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics* (2 vols., Oxford, 1892). The best English translation is by F. H. Peters; the cheapest is that published by Dent and Sons in "Everyman's Library."

With the foundation thus laid the student will

now be able to undertake the study of some specific text-book on Moral Theology. The literature is so extensive that it is difficult to make a choice. Amongst modern authors Lehmkuhl deservedly occupies a prominent place, but his Latin is by no means easy to understand. The writer has used as his own text-book, and would venture strongly to recommend, the *Institutiones Morales Alphonsianae* of Clements Marc. It is published in Rome in two volumes, and the thirteenth edition appeared in 1906, edited by J. Kannengiesser. It can, no doubt, be obtained from the Herder Book Co., 68 Great Russell Street. The work is easy to read, and is clear and concise in its style ; its general arrangement is that shown in the analysis given above. If a book written in English is desired, Slater's *Manual of Moral Theology*, published by Benzinger Bros., may be used ; and the Herder Book Co. is now issuing *A Handbook of Moral Theology*, by Koch-Preuss, in five volumes, three of which have already appeared, which will be found very useful ; an extensive literature is referred to in the foot-notes. A splendid modern work, based upon S. Thomas Aquinas, deserves special mention, the *Manuale Theologiae Moralis* of D. M. Prümmer, O.P., published by Herder in three volumes. It is a book that every serious student of Moral Theology should possess.

After this stage has been reached the student will doubtless shape his own reading, and it would be presumptuous to advise further. Many

interesting problems are constantly springing up after the elementary stage is passed, the subject grips one more and more, and what at first appears to be an appallingly dull subject becomes a fascinating and absorbing study.

CHAPTER I

Professional Secrecy

The relation of the individual to society—Certain moral principles necessary for the stability of society—How far are these principles binding upon individuals?—A medical case of professional secrecy quoted—The sociological importance of it—The Catholic confessional a psychological necessity—Protestantism and its attitude towards secrecy—M. Dejerine and Dr. R. J. Campbell quoted—The inviolability of the Seal of Confession—English Canon Law on the subject—The Visitation Articles of the seventeenth century bishops—Does the State recognize the priest's claim to professional secrecy?—The case of Constance Kent—Other cases quoted—The duty of the priest in regard to professional secrecy.

CERTAIN ethical writers, influenced by biological ideas, have formulated the view that society must not be looked upon as an aggregate of individuals but rather as an organism. The analogy, when carefully analysed and carried to its logical conclusion, is by no means entirely satisfactory, but it does contain elements of truth. It emphasizes, for instance, the great truth that the individual can only realize his own life in so far as he recognizes that his personal well-being is bound up with the well-being of the society of which he is a unit. No man can live by himself and for himself

alone. It also gives full weight to the fact that society for its well-being has rights against the individual members of it.

The recognition of these principles is essential if the social fabric is to hold together at all. For instance, we realize that truthfulness is owed to society, without it the community would quickly fall to pieces ; a nation that does not keep its promises loses its credit with other nations. Great Britain occupies the premier position amongst the countries of the world in commercial matters, and without a doubt she has attained this position because of the general truthfulness and reliability of the individual British merchant in business transactions. But it must be confessed that this truthfulness and reliability is after all only relative. Any one who knows anything about business methods will sadly admit that the ethics of the commercial world are open to grave criticism, and that the whole system is riddled through and through with lies and opportunism.

In the same general way we recognize that when the individual has to give, for some reason or another, his confidence to other persons, that that confidence should be respected. There are many professions which from their very nature make it necessary for those who practise them to become the recipients of their clients' confidential and secret affairs. The outstanding examples are the legal, medical, and clerical professions. Just as in commercial relationships a general reliability and truthfulness are necessary, if business is to

be carried on at all, so in these professions it is essential that there should be a recognition of the fact that confidences must be respected. But is the application of this principle also to be regarded as only relative? Can the lawyer, the doctor, or the priest under any circumstances whatever divulge what has been told him in his professional capacity? It will be recognized, I think, that the question is one of great practical importance and has far-reaching consequences. In what follows an attempt will be made to indicate some of the difficulties involved in the problem, and to consider its implications particularly with regard to the relationship which exists between the priest and his penitent.

A case which was tried before Mr. Justice Bray quite recently at the Worcester Assizes will serve as a convenient starting-point for our inquiry. Briefly stated, it is as follows:—An unmarried woman was charged for the alleged concealment of the birth of her child. The medical man who attended her was called in six hours after the birth; he knew, of course, that a child had been born, although he would be ignorant whether it had lived or not, as he was unable to find the body. The question at once presented itself to him: Ought he, under the circumstances, to inform the police? After carefully considering the whole matter he decided that the confidence placed in him as a medical man by his patient prevented him from giving the information,

and thus breaking the canons of professional secrecy. But he did not trust to his own opinion alone; he also sought the advice of the Medical Defence Union, which supported his decision.

When, however, the case came into court the learned judge unhesitatingly condemned both the doctor and the Medical Defence Union, saying that "there was no professional confidence in criminal cases of this kind, and it was the doctor's duty to inform the police at once in a case like this." But the medical profession did not let the matter end there. Sir John Tweedy, the President of the Medical Defence Union, refused to accept this ruling of Mr. Justice Bray, and in a letter published in the *British Medical Journal* advised doctors to ignore it. His concluding words are worth quoting. "Assured as it is on this important question, the Council feels it incumbent upon it to continue to advise any member . . . that any communication made to him by a patient and any information acquired by reason of his attendance upon such patient are confidential, and that without the authority of the patient a medical man is precluded by the accepted canons of his profession from disclosing such information to any one."

I believe the Council's decision to be without a doubt a true and a right one. The medical profession, in supporting the doctor in this case, display a clear psychological insight. They

recognize that if they are to demand (as indeed they must if they are to practise their profession with any hope of success) the entire confidence of the patient, they must give a certain and sure professional confidence in return, even if they incur the liability of being charged for contempt of court. But the principle involved extends beyond the medical profession, it includes the relationship which exists between the priest and his penitent, and in ever widening circles the whole of our social relationships. It is for this reason that it has been chosen in order to illustrate the contentions we hope to substantiate.

First of all let us realize that the problem is not simply sociological, it has its roots deep down in the psychology of human nature. It concerns the individual as well as society, and perhaps this aspect of it is the more important one. But the two are closely intertwined ; it is because man is a " social animal " that in his sorrows, as well as in his joys, his nature demands companionship. Heart longs to speak to heart when it is tormented by doubt, burdened by grief, or stung by remorse. Our burden is lightened and our conscience relieved if we can find some discreet person to whom we may open our grief. This is the psychology of the secret ; we tell because we must ; our nature demands it. But he who becomes the recipient of the secret has sacred duties towards the one who confides in him ;

both justice and charity demand that such confidences should be respected.

Catholicism has always recognized this psychological need, and has provided for it, under divine guidance, in the confessional. It has also recognized the paramount importance of guarding the interests of the person who makes use of confession, and has placed upon the priest the strict obligation of never revealing, in any circumstances whatever, what passes between himself and his penitent. Protestantism, on the other hand, being almost exclusively individualistic, finds no place for this psychic need in its scheme of life, and must be counted the loser in consequence. In fact, rightly or wrongly, I believe that the disregard of this psychological factor in human nature has produced in Protestant countries and in Protestant minds in general certain interesting if regrettable results.

The first of these is the failure to recognize, in our ordinary dealings with our fellow men, that it is a sacred duty to preserve a secret committed to us, unless we forfeit our own honour thereby. In support of this contention may be instanced the popular use of the word "secret" amongst us; it at once connotes something sinister and underhand. Even the *British Medical Journal*, in dealing with the case we have quoted, avoids using the word, and speaks of "Professional Confidence." Then, again, it is significant that Mr. Justice Hawkins, who was a Catholic, ruled the exact opposite to Mr. Justice Bray in a similar

case, and said "that for a doctor, called in to attend a woman and give her medical advice, to report the fact to the Public Prosecutor would be a monstrous cruelty." We may not, perhaps, be straining the imagination unduly if we suppose that, since the learned judge was himself accustomed to give his entire confidence to his own confessor, he realized quite clearly that disastrous results must inevitably follow if such confidences could be broken. A Protestant, with no such personal experience, would not be likely to let the consideration weigh so heavily with him. One more instance may be given. In one of our northern towns, some time ago, a brutal murder was committed. The man accused of the crime was sentenced to death, and before the execution took place he was visited by the bishop of the diocese, to whom he made his confession. As the bishop left the gaol he was besieged by reporters, who requested him to inform them whether the man confessed his guilt or not. His lordship replied, "My lips are sealed." But can we possibly imagine such an interference on the part of the Press in a Catholic country?

The second result is consequent to the first. Since there is no guarantee, in specific circumstances, that a secret will be kept inviolate, no safeguard provided as in the Catholic confessional, the tendency amongst those who are not Catholics is to stifle this psychological need of confiding in others. They know not whom they may trust, and so trust no one but themselves, losing thereby

the help and consolation they need, and, in some cases, becoming cramped and warped in their nature in consequence.

This contention is supported in a very striking manner by M. Dejerine, the well-known Professor of Nervous Diseases in the University of Paris. The basis of his psychotherapeutic treatment is the obtaining of a full confession of the patient's past life ; by this means he is able to locate the neuropathic condition, and to apply remedies by contra-suggestion. As many thousands of patients have passed through his clinic, his testimony is of real value. This is what he says : " It is a certain fact that we keep during our whole lives the mentality of the religion in which we are brought up, whether we have remained faithful to our religion or not. This mentality is of great importance in the formation—we might almost say in the essential characteristics—of character, and, even with a person who has become a free-thinker, a monotheist, or an atheist, it does not require a very long conversation in order to know what religious beliefs he formerly adhered to. It is by no means our intention to make any profession of faith whatsoever, but this does not hinder us from saying that, from the standpoint of physicians, they are obliged to recognize that it is very much more difficult to produce any psychotherapeutic action upon a Protestant than upon a Catholic, and this, we repeat, is true whether or not the one or the other has remained faithful to the religious conceptions of his youth.

The Catholic, accustomed through confession to disclose the most secret depths of his intimate personality, acts with infinitely less reserve in the presence of the physician than the Protestant. He shows the psychotherapeutist nothing of that instinctive and irrational defiance of the latter, who considers his personality inviolable, and who meets any one who tries to get at the depths of his being with a stone wall, and often rather a rough one."[1]

This quotation not only supports our immediate contention, but also ought to be of great value to those who have been led to accept the Catholic religion, and the use of confession after attaining maturity. Such persons often find the greatest difficulty in making their confessions; it is not too much to say that in many cases it is a positive torture to them. If they realize the truth of Professor Dejerine's contention, and recognize that the root of their trouble is psychological, they ought to be able to overcome the difficulty. No apology is needed for this digression; if its introduction helps only one reader to overcome the dread of using the Sacrament of Penance it will have been amply justified.

And now to resume our main argument. Dr. R. J. Campbell is a very different person from the Salpêtrière Professor, and yet his witness is the same. In his *Spiritual Pilgrimage* (p. 181) he writes: "People have sometimes come to me

[1] Dejerine, *Psychoneuroses and Psychotherapy*, p. 377.

at the City Temple from a long distance, even as far as America, simply and solely because they did not wish to tell any minister near at home what they longed to tell somebody somewhere about the tragedies of their inner life. They preferred to give me no clue to their identity, but merely came, held the conversation, and went away again, and I saw them no more. . . . In a very large proportion of the cases I noted that the principal reason for choosing me as the repository of the confidence was precisely that I did not know the speaker or anything of his antecedents."

This independent witness is extremely interesting both on account of the striking support it gives to our previous contention, and also as a revelation of the immense amount of trouble and pains to which people will go in order to obtain the rest their soul desires. But one can hardly conceive of an instructed Catholic putting himself to all this inconvenience. And why not? There seems to be but one answer, the Catholic knows that his secret will be kept; the Protestant has no such guarantee.

Having considered the matter from a general point of view, we must now—while still keeping in mind the illustration which forms the basis of our inquiry—narrow it down somewhat. So far in using the term Catholic we have been indifferent as to whether it is applied to a Catholic in communion with Rome or Canter-

bury ; but our real concern must be with the latter rather than the former.

We may well ask, Do the generality of English Catholics realize that in the seal of confession they have an absolute guarantee that their confidence will be respected ? With regard to those who make their confessions regularly we believe a decided answer in the affirmative may be given. But there is another class of Churchmen who, while being fully in sympathy with Catholic teaching on the whole, fight shy of confession. May not one of the chief causes of this be that they fail to recognize the "professional" character of the priestly office in the Sacrament of Penance ? What follows will perhaps make this clear.

We are convinced that the laity need more and more to recognize the striking analogy which exists between the medical and the clerical professions. The priest is the physician of the soul, and when sitting in his confessional is acting in a professional capacity just as really and truly as a physician sitting in his consulting room. The position of the latter is, generally speaking, clearly recognized ; men do not object to their wives consulting him even on the most delicate matters, and we see nothing incongruous in, at one time, discussing with him affairs we should not dream of mentioning to any one else, and, at another, dining at his table, or he at ours. What is the cause of this ? It is our ability to separate the individual acting in his professional capacity

from the same individual acting in his private capacity.

And this is just what the average Englishman fails to do with regard to his priest; he cannot separate the physician of souls, the professional man, from the private gentleman he knows and may even admire. A fairly wide experience in teaching different classes of people has convinced the writer that here lies the root objection of the majority of those who decline to make use of the Sacrament of Penance. Once convince your inquirer that a priest hears confessions just in the same spirit as a consultant interviews his patients, that his immediate object is to heal the wounds of the sick soul, and not curiously to know what the penitent has done wrong, and the battle is more than half won.

But to leave the matter here would create an entirely wrong impression regarding the nature of the seal of confession. It is true that the priest, like the medical man, acts in a professional capacity, and looks at things from a professional point of view in his dealings with individuals; but he has something more to offer them than a professional secrecy in return for their confidence. It is not simply natural and social conditions which make him respect the confidence placed in him; he is bound also by divine and ecclesiastical law never to reveal anything that has been made known to him in sacramental confession. The Church has recognized, far more clearly than the medical or

any other profession, that if her children come to the priest to open their grief, and to "receive the benefit of Absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice," they must have a definite assurance that what they have said will never be revealed to any other person.

Lyndwood, our greatest, perhaps our only English canonist, affirms that the priest must preserve the seal in its integrity not only because of the harm that would result from his breaking it, but also because of the sacrament, for "it is almost of the essence of the sacrament to conceal the confession." This obligation to secrecy is absolutely binding; under no circumstances, even if his life were endangered by it, could the priest ever mention the sins told him in confession; and this obligation holds good even after the death of the penitent. This is the position laid down by ecclesiastical law, both universal and for the Church in this country. The 113th of the Canons of 1603 deals with the subject of the seal, and enacts that if a priest makes known what is revealed to him in confession he will incur the penalty of irregularity.

The use of sacramental confession was by no means rare in the seventeenth century, and we find frequent references to the matter in the visitation articles of the bishops of that period. It may not be without interest to the general reader if we quote one or two of them. Bishop Montague (1638) asks: "Does the minister

exhort his parishioners to make confession of their sins to himself, or to some other learned, grave, and discreet minister, especially in Lent, against the holy time of Easter, that they may receive comfort and absolution, and so become worthy receivers of such sacred mysteries?" In his Visitation Articles, 1619, Bishop Overall has the following questions: "And if any man confess his secret and hidden sins, being sick or whole, to the minister, for the unburdening of his conscience, and receiving such spiritual consolation, doth or hath the said minister at any time, revealed and made known to any person, whomsoever, any crime or offence so committed to his trust, contrary to the 113th canon?" And finally we may quote the Articles of Inquiry in the Archdeaconry of the East Riding of York[1]: "And if any man at that or any other time, being sick or whole, useth to confess his secret and hidden sins to the priest, for the unburdening of his conscience and for the receiving of spiritual consolation and ease of mind by him, doth the said priest reveal, or hath he at any time revealed and made known unto any person whatsoever, any crime or offence so committed to his trust and secrecy, contrary to the 113th canon of our Church?"

There still remains another interesting and important matter for our consideration arising out of the case quoted at the beginning of this

[1] *Cosin's Works*, ii. 11.

chapter. What is the position of the clergy regarding the giving of evidence in a court of law? Does the State recognize that what passes between the priest and his penitent is privileged, and therefore cannot be demanded as evidence against the penitent in criminal or other cases; or is the priest liable to be rebuked severely by the judge, as was our doctor, or even committed to prison for contempt of court, if he refuses to disclose what has been revealed to him in confession? Obviously the question is one which can only be dealt with effectively by a legal expert, and the writer can lay no claim to a specialized knowledge in legal matters. But still it does not seem out of place to attempt to indicate a general, if tentative, solution to the question raised. The matter is referred to in Sir Robert Phillimore's work, *The Ecclesiastical Law of the Church of England*, Best's *Law of Evidence*, and an instructive article by Mr. R. S. Nolan in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, on the "Seal of Confession." It is upon these authorities that the writer bases his opinion.

The rules of evidence, except in those cases where they have been defined by statute law, appear to have been gradually evolved by the rulings of the judges during the past two or three hundred years. As might be expected, the privileges of exemption from giving evidence are few and far between, and the only exemption that seems to be universally and indisputably recognized is the case of the defending counsel

and his client. Mr. Justice Patterson, in a case King *v.* Shaw (1834), stated that "Everybody, except counsel and attorneys, is compellable to reveal what they may have heard." Still cases have come before the Courts from time to time in which the question of the privilege of confessors has been raised, and several are instanced by one or other of the authorities we have mentioned. We will select one or two for consideration which seem particularly significant.

Some readers may still remember the startling case of Constance Kent, which caused so much commotion about fifty years ago. The facts are, briefly, as follows: Constance Kent committed a murder, and five years later made her confession to the Rev. Arthur Wagner, a priest of the English Church, announcing to him that it was her intention to give herself up to justice. She carried out her intention, and Fr. Wagner was called as a witness when the case came before the magistrates. Before giving his evidence the priest stated definitely that he would give no information which he had received under the seal of confession. The magistrates did not press him unduly, probably because the case was undefended, and when it came before the Assizes Fr. Wagner was not again called upon to give evidence.

But the matter did not end there; a storm of Protestant indignation broke loose because a priest dared to claim a privilege against the

State for what he had heard in sacramental confession, and questions were asked in both Houses of Parliament. In the House of Lords the Lord Chancellor declared that "there can be no doubt that in a suit or criminal proceeding a clergyman of the Church of England is not privileged so as to decline to answer a question which is put to him for the purposes of justice, on the ground that his answer would reveal something that he had known in confession. He is compelled to answer such a question, and the law of England does not even extend the privilege of refusing to answer to Roman Catholic clergymen in dealing with a person of their own persuasion." [1] This statement of the Lord Chancellor was answered by the Bishop of Exeter (Dr. Phillpotts) who strongly upheld Fr. Wagner's action. He maintained that the ecclesiastical law on the subject was quite clear, and had never been overruled by a temporal court; moreover, the Service for the Visitation of the Sick confirmed the canon law, and thus it was sanctioned by the Act of Uniformity.

Mr. R. S. Nolan quotes another interesting case (this time the priest being one of his own communion), which was tried before Mr. Justice Hill at the Durham Assizes in 1860. It is here slightly abridged. The prosecutor had been robbed of his watch by the prisoner and another

[1] For details of the case see Nolan, *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Vol. XIII, p. 658.

man. A certain Fr. Kelly subsequently handed the watch over to a police inspector, and was summoned as a witness by the prosecutor. Fr. Kelly objected to the form of the oath, not, he explained, to that part of it which required him to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, "but as a minister of the Catholic Church," he said, "I object to that part which states that I shall tell the whole truth." The judge then explained the meaning of the oath. "It is the whole truth touching the trial which you are asked; which you legitimately, according to law, can be asked. If anything is asked of you in the witness-box which the law says ought not to be asked—for instance, if you are asked a question the answer to which might criminate yourself—you would be entitled to say 'I object to answer that question.'" Counsel then asked Fr. Kelly from whom he had received the watch. The reply was "I received it in connection with the confessional." The judge said, "You are not asked at present to disclose anything stated to you in the confessional; you are asked a simple fact—from whom did you receive that watch?" The priest replied that to answer the question would implicate the person who gave him the watch, and that therefore he could not answer it. The judge said, "On the ground that I have stated to you, you are not asked to disclose anything that a penitent may have said to you in the confessional. That you are not asked to disclose; but you are asked to disclose from whom you received

the stolen property on December 25th last. Do you answer, or do you not?" Fr. Kelly replied, "I really cannot, my lord," and he was forthwith committed into custody.

Mr. Nolan comments on the case as follows:— "It may be fairly deduced from Mr. Justice Hill's words that he would not have required Fr. Kelly to disclose any statement which had been made to him in the confessional, and, in this sense, his words may be said to give some support to the Catholic claim for privilege for sacramental confession. But we need not wonder that he was not ready to extend the protection to the act of restitution, though, even in the eyes of non-Catholics, it ought, in all logic, to have been entitled to the same secrecy, in view of the circumstances under which, obviously, it was made."

From these and other cases, which space does not permit us to discuss but which may be studied in the works we have mentioned, it seems fairly clear that the position of the clergy with regard to privilege is at the present time uncertain. Much depends upon the view that may be taken by the particular judge who happens to be trying the case. And herein lies the whole importance of the matter. There seems to have been, as Mr. Nolan says, a "development in regard to the extension of the privilege accorded from the beginning to communications passing between counsel and attorney and their clients. It is conceivable that this

spirit of development may spread itself over other provinces as to which no privilege shall theretofore have been recognized. It is possible that it may be even now ready to declare the privilege in the case of religious confession when the next case arises."

In support of this contention he quotes a case Ruthven *v.* De Bonn, which was tried before Mr. Justice Ridley and a jury in 1901, and at the hearing of which he was present. On this occasion the defendant, who was a Roman Catholic priest, was questioned as to the nature of matters mentioned in sacramental confession, and the judge told him he was not bound to answer. He, the judge, addressing the plaintiff, who was conducting his case in person, said, "You are not entitled to ask what questions priests ask in the confessional, or the answers given." Sir Robert Phillimore takes the same view. "It seems to me," he said, "at least not improbable that, when this question is again raised in an English court of justice, that court will decide in favour of the inviolability of the confession, and expound the law so as to make it in harmony with that of almost every other Christian state."

These opinions are of the greatest significance and importance. A case may arise at any time where the whole matter can be tested afresh, and we feel absolutely certain that the Catholic clergy would welcome such a case. We should claim, clearly and definitely, the privilege of the seal

of confession whatever the result might be to ourselves. And we are not without real hope that Sir Robert Phillimore's words will come true, and that the common law of England will recognize the privilege we claim as our right.

CHAPTER II

Catholicism and Freemasonry

Casuistry applies the abstract principle to the concrete instance—The "case" stated—On what grounds has Rome condemned Freemasonry?—Do they apply to the policy of the Order in England?—Continental Freemasonry considered—In what way, if any, is English Freemasonry compromised by the Continental Orders?—The objects for which English Freemasonry exists—The religious element in Freemasonry—Is this a valid reason for condemning the Order?—Its historical association with the mediaeval Craft Guilds—Can Freemasonry in any way claim to be a religion?—The "case" solved.

CASUISTRY is the application of the general principles of Moral Theology to particular cases, and its aim is to decide, in the practical problems which occur in everyday life, what is the right course of action to pursue. This application of the abstract principle to the concrete instance is often, however, a matter of some difficulty; and, in order to meet this, it was the custom of the casuists to state typical "cases of conscience" under fictitious names, so that the student of morals might learn how a conclusion could be arrived at. Although the method has never passed into popular use it has much to recommend it. It is logical, clear, and succinct, and enables the inquirer to see, almost

at a glance, the main points of the argument. I propose, therefore, to apply it, in a modified form, to the subject with which we have to deal in the present chapter, and proceed to state the case.

Ricardus, a devout Anglo-Catholic, has friends both in business and in private life who are Freemasons. He has himself a desire to join the Order, but has been informed by a Roman Catholic friend that Catholics are not allowed to become Freemasons. He therefore consults Franciscus, his parish priest and confessor, who replies that it is indeed true that the Roman Church forbids her faithful to become Freemasons, but this discipline is imposed only upon those who acknowledge the papal authority ; for an Anglo-Catholic the case must be judged on its own merits. Franciscus, therefore, undertakes to investigate the matter, and promises an answer in due course. The result of this investigation will be seen in what follows.

It was of primary importance to ascertain upon what grounds the Church of Rome had condemned Freemasonry, and to judge if they were legitimate or not when applied to the Order in this country. The first papal pronouncement against Freemasonry was made by Clement XII in the Constitution *In Eminenti*, which bears the date April 28, 1738 ; and a series of enactments have followed at more or less regular intervals down to the present time. The law now in force is the Constitution *Apostolicae Sedis* (1869, Cap. ii, n. 24), by which all the faithful are forbidden to

belong to societies, such as the Freemasons and the Carbonari, which plot either openly or secretly against the Church, or against lawful civil authority. So grave a crime is it considered to be to belong to such societies that those Roman Catholics who join them, or who are in any way favourable to them, or who neglect to denounce their leaders and principal members, are *ipso facto* under the ban of excommunication, and their case is reserved to the Pope for absolution from the offence.

This statement seems to make the point at issue quite clear. Rome condemns Freemasonry for two reasons : she considers it to be an enemy of the Church, and a plotter against lawful civil authority. All Christian and law-abiding people will consider these reasons to be without a doubt both just and right, if they can be substantiated. According to our definition of the case our immediate concern is with the aims and objects of Freemasonry in Great Britain, and we have to try to discover whether or not these charges are true with regard to the Order in this country. Our task is not a difficult one, for, although Freemasonry is commonly described as a "secret society," its doings are nevertheless frequently made known in the public Press.

Let us consider the matter of the State first. It is a well-known fact that the Duke of Connaught, the uncle of our reigning Sovereign, is the present Grand Master of the Order ; it is, perhaps, better known that the late King Edward, when Prince of Wales, was not only the Grand

Master, but also took the keenest interest in Freemasonry. Also, within the last year, *The Times* has announced the initiation of our present Prince of Wales into the craft, and the majority of the Provincial Grand Masters of the Order are drawn from the ranks of the nobility. These facts alone are sufficient to dispose of any suspicion that the Order has as its object a revolt against the existing form of government. That its present position is also its traditional one is shown from the fact that an Act of Parliament of 1799, which was directed against secret and seditious societies, specifically makes an exception in favour of Masonic Lodges, which, it declares, meet for benevolent purposes.

The evidence seems no less clear with regard to the attitude of the Order towards the Church. We frequently read of generous bequests which have been made by local Freemasons to the rebuilding of churches, etc.; we know that they are in the habit of attending divine service on special occasions in their capacity as Freemasons; and also many prominent Churchmen, both clerical and lay, whose orthodoxy is beyond suspicion, are members of the Order, and the clergy are always gladly welcomed as candidates for admission when they desire to join "the craft." We may rest assured, then, that Freemasonry in this country does not lay itself open to the charges brought forward in the Constitution *Apostolicae Sedis*.

The same unqualified statement, however, cannot be made of Freemasonry in other countries.

Amongst the Latin nations it seems often to have been associated with or used for reactionary purposes in political matters, and to have adopted a definitely anti-clerical policy in religious affairs. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine how far the Order as a whole in these countries has been implicated, the devil is never as black as he is painted, and in some cases the policy and action of individual members, prominent for their anti-clerical and socialistic propoganda, may have been ascribed to the Order itself. But when all due allowance has been made there can be no doubt that in France and Italy, in particular, the Freemasons as a body have merited the accusations brought against them by the Roman Church ; how far Rome's policy of exclusion is responsible for this it is not necessary for us to inquire into here. To take an instance, there seems little doubt that the Young Turkish Party, which instigated the Turkish Revolution within the last decade, was directed by the Freemasons, especially those of Italy and France. A sharp distinction, then, must be drawn between the aims and objects of the Order in the Latin and Teutonic nations of Europe. Still we need not be surprised at the action taken by the papal authorities, even if we may not agree with it. Rome regulates for all her people, and in England they are but a small part of the whole, and it is not our concern if she refuses to make an exception in the case of English Freemasonry.

The facts just mentioned open out another

matter for consideration. If certain Masonic bodies on the Continent are tainted with anti-clericalism and revolutionary tendencies, how can an Englishman who is loyal in his religious and civil convictions attach himself to the Order? Our preliminary investigations have shown that many Englishmen of undisputed loyalty and orthodoxy have done so, and we will proceed to attempt to discover on what grounds their action is based. Obviously, much will depend upon the degree of unity in thought and aim and action which exists between English and Continental Freemasonry. An illustration will make this clear. In the Roman Church there exists the well-known religious order, the Society of Jesus. It is a society in which every individual member is an intimate part of the whole. It has one recognized head or Superior-General, and all Provincials throughout the world are in close and constant communication with that head. The unity of the Jesuit Order, then, is complete; it is one in aim, in outlook, and in policy. Consequently any criticism—it matters not for the argument's sake whether it be just or unjust—that is directed against the actions of a particular branch of the Order in any country must necessarily touch and concern the whole society.

Now it is well known that no such unity exists between English Freemasonry and the various Masonic Orders in other countries. English Freemasonry is autonomous and self-contained, and there is no such thing as international relationships

regarding matters of politics or religion. As a matter of fact the discussion of politics and religion is rigorously excluded, and the anti-clerical and political tendencies of Continental Lodges have been officially condemned by the English Order. Our authority for this statement is Mr. W. J. Hughan, a well-known writer on Masonic matters, and an officer of the Grand Lodge of England. He writes the article on Freemasonry in the latest edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and says: "It is to be regretted that on the Continent of Europe Freemasonry has sometimes developed on different lines from that of the 'Mother Grand Lodge' and Anglo-Saxon Grand Lodges generally, and through its political and anti-religious tendencies has come in contact or conflict with the state authorities of the Roman Catholic Church. The 'Grand Orient of France' is an example of this retrograde movement, by its elimination of the paragraph referring to a belief in the 'Great Architect of the Universe' from its *Statuts et réglements généraux*. This deplorable action has led to the withdrawal of all regular Grand Lodges from association with that body, and such separation must continue until a return is made to the ancient and inviolable landmark of the society, which makes it impossible for an atheist either to join or continue a member of the fraternity."

It is, I think, generally recognized that English Freemasonry exists primarily for the promotion of benevolence and good fellowship

amongst its members; in its "ancient landmarks" are included the principles of "brotherly love, relief, and truth." The society has provided, and continues to support, large schools for the providing of a good education for the sons and daughters of Masons who have fallen upon hard times; and it is possible for the more brilliant pupils in these schools to proceed to a University degree. Institutions have also been provided for aged members of the society, and for widows who are unable to support themselves. Mr. Hughan states that "the charities of the society in England, Ireland, and Scotland are extensive and well organized, their united cost per day not being less than £500."

The fact that there is a certain religious element in English Freemasonry is sometimes advanced as an argument against joining the society, and this objection must now receive our consideration. The contention is upheld in several of the papal enactments mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Leo XIII, in an uncompromising denunciation of the Order, declared that the ultimate aim of Freemasonry was to accomplish the overthrow of the whole religious, political, and social order based upon Christian institutions; and in its place to establish a new state of things in accordance with the ideals of the Masonic Order, which were based upon the principles and laws of pure naturalism.

Without a doubt the Pope had foremost in

his mind the kind of anti-clerical Freemasonry which flourished at his own doors, and which we have already noticed; but we must still ask, Does this indictment hold good regarding the tenets of the society in this country? The Grand Lodge of England, indeed, strongly protested at the time against the charges made in the Bull, affirming that English Freemasonry had no political or religious programme, and repudiated the loose opinions and extravagant utterances of Continental Freemasonry. But before we attack the question directly we would first say a word regarding the origin of modern Freemasonry, for it is relevant to the subject.

It is much to be regretted that the early historians of the craft were entirely uncritical in their methods; they mixed up fact with fiction in a most irritating way; and, in their desire to prove the great antiquity of the Order, freely accepted the most grotesque legends and fables. It is, however, a fact of history that modern Freemasonry, as we know it, began its existence with the foundation of the Grand Lodge in London on June 24, 1717; it is thus essentially English in its present form. At the same time it can hardly be doubted that it has some historical connection with the mediaeval building corporations. The word "freemason," as contrasted with the simpler form "mason," appears as early as 1375, but its derivation is uncertain. The *New English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1897) makes several suggestions, one being that the

word stands for *freestone-mason*, i.e. a mason of superior skill who worked in freestone, as opposed to the rough stone mason. But the view which finds most favour is that the freemasons were skilled artisans, who, according to mediaeval custom, were exempt from the control of the local trades guilds, and thus could travel from town to town as their expert services were demanded. These freemasons constituted a closed guild of operative masons, and they had a system of secret signs and passwords by which members of the craft could recognize each other, and thus give proof of their superior attainments. The members of these guilds were, of course, Catholics; and they held their lodge meetings which included prayer and devotions, they had their ceremonies of initiation, and there are not wanting antiquaries who see in the modern Masonic rites distinct traces of the influence of the Benedictine ceremony of profession. How far their tenets and signs correspond with those of modern speculative freemasonry can only be a matter of uncertain conjecture.

We shall all be willing to admit that for a society to have in it a religious element is not *per se* a reason for its condemnation; the question we have to ask is, Does that religious element conflict with a profession of the Catholic Faith? Obviously it is not easy for an outsider to obtain a satisfactory answer, and he must recognize clearly that it is necessary for him

to rely upon information supplied to him by those whom he can trust and who are in a position to know all the facts. And, after all, it is upon the evidence of reliable witnesses that we believe many, if not most, things; so we are only applying in this case the general principle we adopt in most instances. On the present occasion the witness himself must be an orthodox and well-instructed Catholic, who is able to appreciate the point at issue; and if his opinion is favourable, and, in addition, is supported by the evidence of other witnesses who can be trusted, the canons of the reliability of evidence have been fully satisfied. The question, then, is essentially a personal one; the individual inquirer must satisfy himself from his own knowledge of the reliability of his witnesses and act accordingly. It is well to emphasize this, as much good paper and ink have been wasted in the past on unprofitable discussions in our Church papers upon this matter.

But we can, I think, on one particular point, come to some conclusion, even when looking at the matter from outside the Order. It would be quite certain that if Freemasonry claimed in any way to be a rival religion, then no Catholic could possibly belong to it. On its own definition Freemasonry is "a system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols," and obviously this is no definition of a religion. But, setting that aside, there seems to be two facts concerning Freemasonry which would

definitely rule out any claim to its being a religion in the proper sense of the word, even if its members made the claim, which they do not.

The first fact is that the Order is confined exclusively to the male sex. There is one romantic exception in the history of the craft, that of the Hon. Mrs. Aldworth, who when a girl of twenty hid herself in a room in her father's house where a Lodge meeting was being held, and when discovered was promptly made a Mason so that she might not disclose what she had seen and heard; but this is the exception which proves the rule. Now any sect which is to claim at all effectively to be a religion must be universalistic in its aims. It must seek to include not only men and women, but also the children, otherwise it is foredoomed to failure as a religion; it cannot have the slightest hope of success.

The second fact dispels any serious misgiving that Freemasonry may be a rival religion for the same reason as the first. Not only is membership of the society restricted to men, but to men of a certain class. In the early days of its history non-operative members of the Order were restricted to persons of high social standing, or even in some cases to the nobility; and at the present time an aspirant must be fairly well blessed with this world's goods if he is to obtain admission to the society. The force of our argument is not lessened if there be, here and there,

individuals who make Freemasonry a substitute for their religion. It is of the essence of any religion, be it true or false, that it should be inclusive, but Freemasonry is essentially exclusive.

So this test case shows, I think, that the whole matter is one deserving of the attention of the clergy, not only with regard to the advice they may have to give to others, but also respecting their own attitude towards the Order. I have tried all through the discussion to preserve as impersonal an attitude as possible, and to state the pros and cons with scrupulous fairness. Let us summarize the conclusions arrived at by returning to the case stated at the beginning of the chapter. Franciscus rules that Ricardus has perfect liberty to become a Freemason, and for the following reasons:—The Church in England has never forbidden her faithful to become members of the Order, and the reasons for which the Order is condemned by the Roman Church do not exist in England. English Freemasonry is not united to Continental Freemasonry in such a way that the actions of the latter can compromise the position of the former. Finally, personal investigation has shown Franciscus that there is reliable evidence that the religious element in Freemasonry does not conflict with a profession of the Catholic Faith; and, from the very nature of the constitution of the Order, it cannot be considered as in any sense a rival religion.

CHAPTER III

Religious Vocations

Martha and Mary are types of the secular and religious life—Monasticism may be suppressed, but it cannot be destroyed—The Marys are often misunderstood—The cause of this misunderstanding—The way in which the parochial clergy might help to remove it—A consideration of the positive signs of religious vocation—A right motive—Aptitude for prayer—Willingness to surrender self—The hindrances to vocation discussed—Those which form a valid objection to vocation—Hindrances which may be overcome—Personal qualifications of the aspirant.

I

SIMPLY to regard Martha and Mary as two minor characters in the great Gospel drama is to miss the whole significance of their presence therein. The sisters of Lazarus are not merely individuals, they are types. As such they have existed since man became man, since the time when the human soul began to grope after the God Who created it, and to long for a closer union with Him. And while man remains man they will still continue to exist, they will go on in their several ways trying to seek and to serve God, they cannot be separated into sex or nationality, for they represent the

two great divisions into which the religious sense in mankind is cast. The elder sister seeks God in activity, she finds Him in the men and women around her, giving and spending herself for the sake of those whom the Master loved so well that He died for them. To her religion pure and undefiled is to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep herself unspotted from the world. But Mary is cast in a different mould. As the song of the sea calls the mariner with a persistence not to be denied, or as the icy regions of the Arctic compel the explorer to return to them again and again, so Mary is drawn irresistibly to the Master's feet : she cannot stay away, it is only when she is there that her soul finds rest.

The Marys, of course, are in the minority ; they always have been and they always will be. But their claim must not be denied ; it is the duty of the Church, the representative of the Master, to provide for her Marys as well as for her Marthas. In fact, history shows us that the Church has no choice in the matter. The Marys may be small in number and their voices feeble, but they always manage to make themselves effectually heard. By the end of the third century of the Christian era monasticism was firmly and permanently established as part of the system of the Church Catholic, and by the end of the fourth century it was duly regulated under proper authority. On British soil it flourished amazingly ; it dominated the Celtic Church, which

was essentially monastic, and more than half our glorious mediaeval cathedrals are monuments of monkish devotion and piety. Henry VIII, impelled by lust and greed, ruthlessly suppressed the religious life ; but he could not destroy it, for its roots are struck deep in the Christian character. The difference was that it was no longer under control, no longer regulated by authority, but it still lived.

Little Gidding held a small number of Marys in visible communion with the Church ; that was an exception, the time was not yet ripe for a full revival. In the meantime George Fox had his vision of the "inner light," and contemplative souls followed him into schism in order to satisfy the cravings of their being. Later, history repeated itself, and this time John Wesley provided what was lacking in the official presentation of religion. But happily the Oxford Revival has changed our regrets into rejoicings ; once more the religious life is not only restored amongst us, but has received recognition and become again subject to regulation and control ; our Marys do not now need, as in those dark, unhappy former days, to seek the spiritual consolation they desire outside their own communion.

The object of the present chapter is twofold : in the first place I would enter a plea for a fuller recognition of the fact that God does call certain souls to follow the way of Mary ; and in the second an attempt will be made to indicate the

signs by which such a call may be discerned when it does come.

Martha, in the Gospel, most certainly misunderstood her sister; she seems, in fact, almost to have despised her. What is true regarding the individual is true also regarding the type. The active mind generally fails to understand the mystic and the contemplative. Those who hear the call to the religious life must expect to be misunderstood, perhaps despised; it is the first test which comes to those who would follow the way of Mary. And the opposition is generally from those who love the aspirant most of all—parents, relations, or intimate friends. This is by no means always to be put down to "Protestant prejudice"; more often than not it is due to lack of understanding. Francis of Assisi had a father who was a good Catholic; so long as his son spent his money lavishly and consorted with the *élite* of Assisi the father was contented. But when Francis began to develop a strange affection for lepers, to give away his money to the poor, and to clothe himself in rags, the paternal wrath was kindled. Clearly something must be done to stop this nonsense; so the lad was promptly locked up in a cellar! Neither parents nor children adopt such heroic measures in the twentieth century, but the opposition, if it be less severe, is just as real and trying. Religion, with a capital R, may be all very well as a general principle, but when a member of one's own family wishes to assume the Habit it is a different

matter ; all kinds of obstacles and objections are placed in the way of the aspirant. Need we be surprised that so many vocations wither away and fail to be realized ?

The cause of this opposition is not, I think, far to seek. It lies in the deeply-rooted idea that the religious state, with its threefold vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, is not a *natural* state of life. This, of course, is quite true. How can it be " natural " to desire to leave the joys and comforts of home life and those whom we love ; or to renounce personal property and embrace a life of poverty ; or, still harder, to give up one's own will in perfect obedience to a higher will ? Such things are certainly not natural for us to do. But the mistake is in supposing that because they are not natural therefore they are contrary to nature. The religious life is *supernatural*, and that is all the difference in the world. It is hard for the Marthas to understand this important distinction ; the active mind is practical, and runs in clear-cut grooves ; but once the mental vision is broadened the difficulty is easily removed, for we see then that there is such a thing as a diversity of gifts, and we can value our own without disparaging those of others.

Must not some of the misunderstanding, which undoubtedly exists in the minds of the laity regarding the religious life, be laid at the door of the clergy ? We shall all agree that the generality of Catholic priests profess at least

a theoretical sympathy with the way of Mary, and express their gratitude that the religious life is once more revived amongst us. And yet, in the majority of cases, it is true to say that it goes no further than this, and in consequence the superiors of our religious communities lament the lack of vocations. How many times, say during the past ten years, has the reader heard, or given (if he is a priest) an instruction on religious vocations? It is difficult to see why such instructions should not be given. They would most certainly claim the interest of those who heard them, particularly if an attempt were made to show how monasticism has influenced the thought and art of the Church throughout the ages.

There is hardly a town or village in the country which has not in its neighbourhood some well-known and interesting relic of the time when religious houses flourished in mediaeval England. These venerable ruins might well be taken as the basis for a really interesting series of addresses on the religious life; all that is needed to repopulate them again is to study for a few minutes some such book as Cardinal Gasquet's *English Monastic Life*.[1] From this can be learned the rule which the particular monastery observed, the daily round of prayer and labour which went on from Matins to Compline; and the transition from those days to the religious houses

[1] Published in "The Antiquary's Books." Methuen & Co. 1904.

of the present time is easy, and thus the question of personal vocation in one's individual hearers is ultimately raised. We would plead, then, that more definite instruction should be given from the pulpit, and to parochial wards and guilds, on the aims and objects of the religious life ; the seed thus sown would not always fall on stony ground.

But while maintaining that the seed of vocation is sown by preaching, we should be equally emphatic in holding that it is in the Sacrament of Penance that the tender blade is to be first discerned, and then nourished so that it may finally bear fruit. The responsibility of the spiritual director is indeed great in this matter. A skilful physician, by an early and accurate diagnosis, may save his patient from many weary years of pain and suffering ; so also the physician of souls, by observing the first indications of a call to the religious life, may lead his penitent into those paths where alone the soul's true joy and peace is to be found. Many a life is a disappointed life because the true vocation has never been realized. This brings us to a consideration of some of the signs by which the religious vocation may be discerned.

II

We will deal, first of all, with what may be called the positive signs of vocation, leaving until the end of the chapter various obstacles which, if present in individual cases, may be

considered to be valid impediments against entering the religious state. It will be understood, of course, that any general signs must of necessity be incomplete and tentative, for God's methods are not stereotyped; we can do no more than indicate on broad lines what is to be expected from those who feel that they are called to the way of Mary.

First and foremost, both director and aspirant need to recognize that the essential feature of a true vocation is a right motive. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." The call is from God to the soul, a call to closer union with Him, and to a state of perfection. Motives, then, must be tested and probed. We all grow world-weary at times, and have a desire to escape and be at rest, to find a life free from care and anxiety. But this is not the call of religion, it is simply the appeal of circumstances; a monastery is no place for a person satiated with the world and himself; he would quickly find that his life was a greater burden than before. Still, careful discrimination is necessary in this matter, for sometimes these circumstances are present even when the vocation is a true one; each individual case must be carefully considered, and referred to the Holy Spirit.

Then the aspirant will be expected to show at least some aptitude for prayer and communion with God; this may not be very great at first, and the director ought not to expect too high a standard in the early stages while the vocation

is still uncertain ; long and patient training may be necessary before proficiency comes, but the beginnings of it will be there, for prayer is the basis of the religious life. The mother superior of one of our well-known communities writes to me as follows :—" We want people with a great love of prayer and desire for it ; but we do not want those who think their prayer ends when they get off their knees, but those who seek to make their whole life, their set work as well as their set times of devotion, one long prayer, one act of worship." The time during which the vocation is slowly unfolding itself will be most valuable to the director in enabling him to judge whether this standard can ultimately be attained by the aspirant.

When the penitent first expresses a desire to consider the question of religious vocation, his director should explain to him thoroughly the nature of the new life to which he feels himself called, taking care not to minimize the difficulties and trials which are involved in it. He should be advised to refrain from discussing the matter with others until his mind is quite made up ; in the meantime he must resort to prayer and a frequent reception of the Blessed Sacrament so that he may learn the will of God. Also he must avoid, as far as possible, any entanglement with frivolous and worldly pleasures ; they only distract the mind from its more serious object, and, if indulged in to any extent, may be the means of destroying

the vocation. A penitent who accepts this advice, and carries it out to the best of his ability, may almost certainly be judged to have the right dispositions.

Another sign which ought to be present is the willingness to surrender self. Inclination is not always the same as vocation, and the will must be ever ready to bend itself to the will of God. Once more I avail myself of the ripe experience of my correspondent. "It seems to me," she says, "that on the whole aspirants do not come in such a spirit of self-surrender and willingness to be taught as formerly. They bring preconceived ideas of what they want, or think ought to be the case, in religion. Many come feeling that they are called to a contemplative life without in the least understanding it. They come, some of them, with the idea, apparently, that work is almost wrong, not realizing that there must, of necessity, be much manual work even in an enclosed community."

And a last point. The aspirant should give evidence of a firm and steadfast purpose, for it rarely happens that a vocation can be tested at once. This time of waiting, as indicated above, may be of great value; and if throughout the period the will is steadfast, unwavering, and uncomplaining, there can be little doubt that the vocation is a true one. When all or most of these signs are present no hesitation is possible; it is a sacred duty for those who experience them to put the call to the final test.

This chapter would be incomplete if no reference were made to the hindrances to vocation, for experience shows that almost invariably with the call to the religious life there come also difficulties and obstacles. It is of the greatest importance that both the director and the aspirant should be in a position to determine whether these hindrances are valid, and by their presence show that there is no true vocation; or whether they are to be grappled with and overcome.

Amongst those obstacles which certainly invalidate entrance to religion is that of the lack of a proper use of the reason. Feeble-minded persons, and those who have not yet reached the age of mature reason must be discouraged from seeking the religious life. The cause is obvious; he who gives himself to God in religion does so after due deliberation and the exercise of his understanding, and this is impossible in the case of those we are considering. Marriage is also a valid impediment; the aspirant is not free to enter religion. In mediaeval times it was not uncommon for a married person to take religious vows with the free consent of the other party, the impediment being thus removed; but at the present day the difficulties would be so serious that no religious community would willingly accept a person whose consort was still living. For the same reason a person who has contracted debts cannot enter religion; to pay such debts is a prior

obligation, and must be fulfilled if it is at all possible.

A harder question to decide, and one which is liable to be met with, is the case of a person who has been guilty of crime, has repented, and desires to enter religion. It seems clear that one who has been guilty of an undiscovered crime which, if brought to light, would render him liable to imprisonment ought not to seek admission into a community. Also, it is not desirable that a person whose life has been a public scandal should enter an ordinary religious house; if a community, knowing all the facts, decides to receive him the responsibility, of course, rests with the community, and the aspirant is free to enter. There is a third case—that of a person who has wronged another, and who, by remaining in the world, can repair the injury he has done. Such a one cannot be admitted into religion until he has made the necessary restitution; if, however, such restitution is impossible, and no advantage is to be gained by his delaying his vocation, he is free to follow it.[1]

One of the commonest obstacles to the realization of a religious vocation is that already mentioned in the first part of this chapter—the opposition which comes from those who love the aspirant most. We are not concerned now with

[1] The opinions here expressed are those generally accepted by Moralists, and are based upon the teaching of S. Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologica*, II, 2, q. 189.

those cases in which the entrance of the postulant into religion would lead to serious loss or inconvenience to the parents, but rather with the opposition which arises from affection, or from prejudice against the religious life. The question which the aspirant has to decide is, Can I disobey what I believe, after much prayer and heart-searching, to be the call of God, because it gives my parents pain for me to follow that call? Brought thus face to face with the real issue only one answer seems possible. In every age God has called some souls to forsake all and follow Him; it is a hard decision to make, when the call comes, but once made in perfect faith and trust in Him it will bring its own peace and consolation. It is not too much to say that the revival of the religious life in England was made possible because many of the brave women who first responded to their vocation did so in opposition to the wishes of those whom they loved best on this earth.

The case is more difficult when the aspirant feels that his or her home duties are of such a nature that to enter religion would mean avoiding a positive duty. There can be no doubt that it would be wrong for any one to leave the home if by so doing it meant that his parents would be reduced to grave necessity. Filial duty demands that he should remain in the world so long as his parents need his assistance. But the issue is not always as clearly

defined as this ; more often than not the extent of the home obligations is very difficult to estimate correctly. A satisfactory solution can generally be obtained by applying the circumstances to another vocation, which is more clearly recognized by the world—that of marriage. The aspirant would then ask, Suppose I were engaged to be married, should I, under the present circumstances, feel justified in fulfilling my engagement? Mere inconvenience would not be a sufficient reason for giving a negative answer, nor should it stand in the way when the call comes from the heavenly Bridegroom.

A few words must be written, in conclusion, regarding the hindrances which arise from the personality of the aspirant. The confessor should always satisfy himself, before recommending his penitent to consider seriously an inclination to enter religion, that the person possesses the necessary personal qualifications to fulfil the vocation. Weak and sickly people are not physically fitted for the religious life ; in many Orders considerable demands are made upon the vitality, and only persons in sound health can endure the life.

The temperament must also be considered; an emotional, irresolute, or undisciplined person would find it very difficult to settle down to life in a community. When so many people are living together under rule it is essential that the character of individuals should be disciplined to be punctual, disinterested, and willing to sink

self for the general well-being of the community. It is not necessary, of course, that these characteristics should be fully developed, but a general disposition to obedience and discipline ought to be present at the dawn of vocation, and the rule of the community will strengthen and perfect it later on.

Our treatment of this important subject has necessarily been incomplete, but it is hoped that enough has been said to indicate the general lines upon which the vocation to the religious life may be tested.

CHAPTER IV

Clerical Celibacy

Clerical celibacy not a question of expediency—The theory that the clergy, by the fact of their ordination, are unmarriageable—The failure of this theory in everyday life—Some reasons for this failure—The need for recognizing that the term "bachelor clergyman" is not synonymous with "celibate priest"—A comparison of the Anglican and Roman Ordinals—A statement of the case for taking a vow of celibacy—The testing of a vocation to the celibate life—The difficulties and blessings of the life of perpetual celibacy—"He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

THE present high cost of living, and the totally inadequate income possessed by the majority of the clergy to meet these high prices, have once more brought to the fore the question of clerical celibacy. It has been advocated, as a measure of pure expediency, that the bishops should require of their ordinands a promise that they will not entertain the idea of marriage for a certain number of years, or until such a time as they may be in the position to support a wife and family as befits their station in society. It is not likely that this suggestion will commend itself to the majority of Churchmen; it is open to grave objections, and the practical man would at once say, "If

the Church cannot provide an adequate stipend for her married clergy it is time she set about devising some means for so doing, or, failing that, she should make a common rule that all clergy shall remain unmarried."

Many Anglican students of Church history and Canon Law, however, maintain that the whole question was settled long ago; there is no need to make a rule forbidding the clergy to marry, such a rule has existed universally in the Catholic Church, of which the Church in England is a part, since the earliest days, and has never been abrogated. According to this view a Catholic priest has no business to marry at all; the marriage of priests is dead against ecumenical authority—which no individual part of the Church can set aside—and is a modern abuse, a blunder of the Protestant Reformation. This opinion is also shared by many of the clergy. They hold that by the fact of their ordination to the priesthood they become *ipso facto* non-marriageable; the question is for them closed. It is a theory which makes a strong appeal to the logical, legal, and scientific mind, and I freely acknowledge the force of it. But many theories, which are true in the abstract, are very difficult to carry out in practice where varied circumstances have to be taken into account. So it is in the present instance, when we come down into the arena of everyday life we are at once met by difficulties and inconsistencies.

Most of us, I think, have met at least one

young priest who has expressed in our hearing very definite views about the unmarriageableness of the clergy; he may even, in the heat of debate, have given vent to expressions about the married clergy which, to say the least of it, were not in good taste. Then a few years later we have come across this priest again, and we find that he is "leading about a wife," and probably one or two little levites as well. What are we to make of it? Surely there is a weak link somewhere in the chain of the argument. Can we put our finger on it? I think we can. As a matter of fact, however sound the opinion in question may be in theory, the experiences of everyday life are dead against it.

The actual state of affairs is that a priest who holds such an opinion is constantly rubbing shoulders with other priests who are sound Catholics, but who have married, even after ordination; he stays at their homes, meets their wives, and is often admitted into close friendship with the family. Then again the majority of the laity with whom he comes in contact accept the marriage of the clergy as a matter of course; they welcome him into their houses as a marriageable person, and think rather better than worse of him if he enters the married state; and we must not forget that Article XXXII is always with us. He is thus, every day of his life, in the midst of an atmosphere which is entirely uncongenial to his theory. We may regret it when we find that his theory has

gradually weakened, and finally broken down, but we must not be surprised ; human nature being what it is, we ought to expect it.

This, I think, is a fair and true representation of the actual facts, and from our study of them we ought to be able to draw some definite conclusion. I would venture to suggest that the mistake many of the clergy have made in the past is in supposing that the term "bachelor clergyman" is synonymous with "celibate priest." I am quite aware that this statement will meet with stern disapproval from those of the clergy (and they are by no means small in number and influence) who hold that by the fact of their ordination they become unmarriageable. They will say that there is no need for them to take celibate vows, they did so when they were ordained priests. But, I think, in face of the facts, this position cannot seriously be maintained. Leaving aside for the moment popular opinion and the Articles of Religion, our present ordinal gives no hint that a celibate life is expected ; it might even be argued that indirectly the opposite is assumed. The question addressed by the bishop to his ordinands, "Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves, and your families, according to the doctrine of Christ ; and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ ?" may certainly be interpreted to mean that they have either at the time families to fashion according to the doctrine of

Christ, or that they may possibly have such in the future.

Far different is the case when we turn to the Roman ordinal ; there the candidate for the subdiaconate is solemnly warned by the bishop, at the beginning of the ceremony, of the serious obligation he is taking upon himself. "You ought," he says, "anxiously to consider again and again what sort of a burden this is which you are taking upon you of your own accord. Up to this you are free. You may still, if you choose, turn to the aims and desires of the world. But if you receive this order it will no longer be lawful to turn back from your purpose. You will be required to continue in the service of God, and with His assistance *to observe chastity* ; and to be bound for ever in the ministrations of the altar, to serve whom is to reign." The position is quite clear ; the candidate who offers himself after this warning binds himself by a vow of chastity ; hereafter he is unable to contract a valid marriage. We have nothing corresponding to this in our ordinal, much as we may desire it ; and this being so, there seems to be no ground for supposing that ordination implies a vow of celibacy.

So much, then, by way of criticism of the position as it stands ; it has been made with the view of attempting to get something constructive out of it. Surely the frequent failure of the theory that the clergy are *ipso facto* unmarriageable shows us that something more ought to be

done to safeguard the position held. I would venture to suggest, without in any way wishing to appear presumptuous, to aspirants to the priesthood, and to those of the clergy who feel that a priest ought not to marry, that they should think over carefully the advisability of taking celibate vows. I am convinced that this is the only reasonable and safe course of conduct to adopt.

The celibate life is a vocation, a call from God to dedicate our virginity to Him, and as such it is a sacred and solemn thing, and ought to be sealed with a vow. If we feel, as many of us do, that this call has come to us it must be faced in a very serious spirit, and we must guard ourselves in every possible way from losing that vocation. It is a precious, a divine call, if it does come ; and much prayer and waiting upon God is necessary before we finally make up our minds. And when the Holy Spirit has given a clear answer the cal should be obeyed. What makes some of us sad when we hear of the marriage of a priest is the thought that circumstances may have been too strong for him, and that he has lost a vocation ; but I hope we should never pass judgement upon him. Still less should we deny that lives of the greatest sanctity and self-denial are lived by thousands of the married clergy ; they have often far greater burdens to bear than the celibate priest, and we thank God for the stimulus and help we receive from their example. But, surely, all this points to the truth of our contention, that he who believes he has a vocation from God to the

celibate life should offer himself in response to that vocation, and confirm it with a vow.

It may be said, "But do you realize what a serious thing you are advising men to undertake?" I reply "I believe I do." And in support of this answer I feel sure my readers will not think it out of place if I record a piece of personal history for the help of others. Over ten years ago this question occupied almost all my thoughts for many months. I had to decide whether God had given me this particular vocation or not. In the end I believed that a definite answer had come, and I approached my confessor on the matter. I was fortunate in having the advice of that saintly and acute man of God, the late Father Maxwell, S.S.J.E., then Superior of the Society of S. John the Evangelist, Cowley. My difficulty was: Ought I to take vows for life, or only for a period of five or more years? Father Maxwell listened patiently to my reasons for and against. Then he asked me "Are you quite sure that God has called you to the celibate life?" I replied without hesitation that I was. "Then, my son," he replied, "take your vows for life, show your trust in God; if you believed that you were called to the married state you would not hesitate." The answer was characteristic of the man. His advice was taken, and from that day to this there has never been one moment's regret that the decision was made once and for all. It is upon this counsel offered by Father Maxwell that I have always based any advice I have given

to those who have sought my direction in this matter.

The first thing to establish is the certainty of the vocation, and the decision must not be hurried, but made with calmness and deliberation. The director should point out the special trials and temptations which are attendant upon the celibate life, for to be forewarned is to be forearmed. It must be clearly understood that for the celibate all familiarity, even of the most innocent kind, with the opposite sex is not to be entertained. The chief trial of the celibate life is the sense of isolation and lack of companionship, hence he who embraces it must ever be striving to attain to perfect union with God ; he finds his chief friendship, not amongst his fellow men, but in his inner life with God, and his parochial work done in God's service. But once the vocation is certain there need be no fear in accepting it. God supplies the grace which is needed to fulfil it, just as He gives His grace to those who receive the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. And this divine help is particularly needed when the priest enters upon that period of his life known as middle-age ; it is then that he feels his loneliness most of all. A young priest has his whole life opening out before him, and if he is keen and enthusiastic about his work he has little temptation to bemoan any lack of companionship. But it is otherwise with the middle-aged, the end is in sight now, and in many cases such a one feels that his best work is done, he wants to rest on his

oars a little, and drift down the stream. This is, no doubt, the reason why late marriages are far from uncommon; but it also shows the vital importance of our contention that those who believe they have the vocation to the celibate life should confirm it with a vow. Personal experience has shown that this brings calmness and certainty, the battle was fought long ago, the past holds no vain regrets, and the future is no matter for anxious thought.

The reader will have noticed, no doubt, that no plea has been made on utilitarian grounds for the celibacy of the clergy. This has been done with deliberate intention, for I believe that the real issue has time and again been obscured, if not degraded, by the introduction of utilitarian ideas. The celibate life is first and foremost a question of vocation. Does God require it of me? When this is remembered there need be no misunderstanding between the celibate and the married man; both have, we assume, responded to their vocation. Neither should comparisons be made as to which is the harder life; both have their dangers and difficulties, their joys and consolations; every state of life has its own burdens and responsibilities, and, to the faithful follower of his vocation, grace is supplied to meet them as they come.

But there is one consideration, which might perhaps be called utilitarian, which does exercise its influence when a priest or ordinand is contemplating his call to the celibate life. He has

a vocation also to the priesthood, and he may rightly ask: "Suppose God has given me the vocation of celibacy, will it help my priestly life?" I am absolutely certain it will, because, from the very nature of it, it makes for a life of detachment. The celibate is free, he needs to consider no one, least of all himself: in fact he should resolve that his life is going to be in every sense an offering. His vocation is the giving of himself to God to be used as He wills; this is the attitude of mind which marks off the difference between a life dedicated to chastity and service, and a mere bachelor existence. Thus he can labour in a slum all the days of his life if God wants him to be there; but it is hardly fair to ask this of one's wife and children. He can, if he will, ignore entirely all prospects of promotion; there need be no "wire-pulling" in his case for a better living; he has no little ones with hungry mouths, nor big boys who must be educated for the battle of life. May it not be that God has called him to live the celibate life just because He has work for him to do which makes this very detachment an essential element in his life? "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

CHAPTER V

The Ethics of Gambling

Sir Henry Hawkins on the fascination of gambling—A criticism of the attitude of absolute repression—Its origin to be found in the Lutheran and Calvinistic doctrine of the total depravity of human nature — The *Westminster Confession*—The teaching of Catholic moral theology—The question of the lottery—The argument for gaming and card-playing—Bishop Jeremy Taylor on games of chance—The betting contract—The gambler in his relation to society—The speculator in "options" and "futures"—An appeal to the moral sense.

FEW people have been better qualified to pronounce an authoritative opinion upon the subject it is proposed to discuss in this chapter than the late Lord Brampton, more familiarly known to the public as Sir Henry Hawkins. In his long and brilliant career at the Bar and on the Judge's Bench he came in close contact with men and women drawn from all grades of society; in his social life he mixed with the best intellects of his time; and in his recreations, which included a keen appreciation of horse-racing, he had ample opportunity of observing the effect of the passion for gambling upon its devotees. He gives his opinion in his

Reminiscences thus: "I have always thought that the passion for gambling is one of the strongest propensities of our nature, and once the mind is given to it there is no restraint possible, either from law or pulpit. Its fascination never slackens, and time never blunts the keen desire of self-gratification which it engenders, while the grip with which it fastens upon us is as fast in old age as in youth. It will absorb all other pleasures and pastimes." We may add that, true to the convictions here expressed, Mr. Justice Hawkins, when quite a young man, deliberately resolved never to play games for money, or to bet on the result of a race.

The recognition of the peculiar and dangerous fascination which the element of chance in gambling engenders is, no doubt, responsible for many people taking the stern and uncompromising attitude they do towards all games of chance. They will not allow a pack of cards, which they call "the devil's playthings," to appear in their houses; they would, if they had it in their power, entirely prohibit horse-racing; and their young people are strictly forbidden to take part in any game of chance, quite irrespective of whether it is for innocent amusement or for a money stake. But this is not the sole cause for the adoption of this attitude. The dreadful and uncompromising doctrines annunciated both by Lutherans and Calvinists regarding original sin, and the consequent *total* depravity

of human nature, have contributed in no small degree towards it. The *Westminster Confession* (c. vi) committed itself to the following statement concerning our first parents and ourselves : "By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, *whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil*, do proceed all actual transgressions."

This is indeed a terrible view to take of human nature, and it is not to be wondered at that it produced the distinctive Puritan outlook on life, which condemned all pleasures as sinful, and made the world nothing but a dreary prison. It may be objected, however, that nowadays very few people would accept this statement literally ; but, even if we grant this to be the case (which, personally, I should hesitate to do), the fact remains that, subconsciously, if not openly, the old Puritan idea that human nature is hopelessly corrupt and has nothing good or healthy in itself is very deeply rooted indeed. Its deplorable consequences are seen in the treatment of the young people. They cannot be trusted to enjoy amusements innocent

in themselves, because they are a source of temptation; and, owing to the total depravity of human nature, they must be jealously guarded from them; hence the policy of wrapping them up in cotton wool and placing them under a glass case.

Now experience shows that this is a false psychology; repression is always harmful, and hardly ever fails to reap its harvest. Youth has to be trained and prepared for the battle of life, and the task set us is to guide the various emotions and desires into the right channels, to teach how to use and not to abuse, and not simply to repress these desires. The latter method more often than not defeats itself, and we find that when the restraint is removed, as it is bound to be in due course, youth tries its wings in its new found freedom and burns them badly in the flame. The fact is that stern prohibition generally arouses a morbid curiosity, which is far more dangerous than the evil it seeks to avoid. One is tempted to think that Lord Brampton would have given his approval to the broader and, as I believe, the saner outlook of the Catholic moralists upon this subject.

The text-books on moral theology in their chapters on "Contracts" include a section dealing with those contracts which depend for their effect of loss or gain upon some event which is uncertain. Three species of contract come under this definition—lotteries, gaming, and betting; and

as they are all germane to our subject we will consider them in turn.

The essence of the lottery is that a person purchases for a small sum of money the chance of winning a much larger value either in specie or in goods. Provided that the amount paid for the chance is proportionate to the value of the prize, and that the drawing of the lots is free from fraud, it is contended that, from the side of conscience, a lottery is lawful, since it does not offend either against justice or the natural law. In most European countries the lottery is allowed by municipal law, and is often under State control; but in England it is prohibited. Few of us, with the exception of the rigorists we have mentioned above, would like to say that a normal person who stakes a small sum in this way is thereby guilty of sin. The familiar and popular "raffle" at the Anglican bazaar is, of course, a lottery pure and simple; and to many of us, who accept the doctrine of S. Thomas Aquinas regarding the "just price" to be demanded for goods, it is far less reprehensible than the bazaar itself. The Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland seem to excel in the "raffle." Some time ago the writer received a communication inviting him to subscribe to a lottery for the building of a church. The first prize was a pig weighing twenty-four stone, the second a case of whiskey, and the third a certain quantity of potatoes!

Gaming consists in playing games or sports for

stakes in money or articles of value. Card-playing is the most frequent form of gaming in this country, and it will suit our purpose for illustration as well as any other. It is popularly justified in the following manner: "After my day's work I have earned the right to a few hours' recreation. I may take this recreation in various ways—by visiting the theatre, by going to a concert, or by playing a quiet rubber of bridge with my friends. I pay for my recreation at the theatre or concert-hall, and if I choose to lose an equivalent sum at bridge I am doing nothing morally wrong. My primary motive in playing for a wager is to add an interest to the game, and not to win money. I am indifferent whether I win or lose." Stated thus the argument is quite sound, and if the conditions specified are strictly observed we cannot say that a sin has been committed. But having admitted this we must also recognize that comparatively few people do observe these conditions, and that for the majority of people gaming, regularly practiced, soon becomes abused, and leads to sin and disaster.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor in his *Ductor Dubitantium* takes a wise and moderate view of the whole question. He allows, as against the Puritan position, that there is nothing evil in card-games themselves, and that they may be used as an innocent recreation. His statement of the case, if rather quaint, is of sufficient interest, I think, to be quoted at some length.

"Now that cards and dice are, of themselves, lawful," he says, "I do not know any reason to doubt. For if they be unlawful, it is because they are forbidden, or because there is in them something that is forbidden. They are nowhere of themselves forbidden; and what is in them that is criminal or suspicious? Is it because there is chance and contingency in them? There is so in all human affairs: in merchandise; in laying wagers; in all consultations and wars; in journeys and agriculture; in teaching and learning; in putting children to school or keeping them at home; in the price of the market; and in the vendibility of commodities. . . . He that means to make his games lawful must not play for money but for refreshment. This though, it may be, few will believe, yet it is the most considerable thing to be amended in the games of civil and sober persons. For the gaining of money can have no influence into the game to make it the more recreative, unless covetousness hold the box. The recreation is to divert the mind or body from labours by attending to something that pleases and gives no trouble; now this is in the conduct of your game, in the managing a prosperous chance to advantage, and removing the unprosperous from detriment and loss of victory, so to cross the proverb, Πέπτωκεν ἔξω κακῶν οὐ χίος ἀλλὰ κῶος, and that by wit he may relieve his adverse chance, and by a symbol learn to make good and virtuous use of every cross accident.

"But when money is at stake, either the sum is trifling, or it is considerable. If trifling, it can be of no purpose unless to serve the ends of some little hospitable entertainment or love-feast, and then there is nothing amiss; but if it be considerable, there is a wide door open to temptation, and a man cannot be indifferent to win or lose a great sum of money, though he can easily pretend it. If a man be willing or indifferent to lose his own money, and not at all desirous to get another's, to what purpose is it that he plays for it? If he be not indifferent, then he is covetous, or he is a fool; he covets that which is not his own, or unreasonably ventures that which is. If without the money he cannot mind his game, then the game is no divertisement, no recreation, but the money is all the sport; and therefore covetousness is all the design; but if he can be recreated by the game alone, the money does but change it from lawful to unlawful, and the man from being weary to become covetous, and from the trouble of labour or study remove him to the worse trouble of fear and anger and impatient desires."

"Nothing is more base," he continues, "than to get advantages by the loss of others; they that do so, and make the loss of their neighbour their game and pastime, are the worst of men. But concerning the loss of our money, let a man pretend what he please, that he plays for no more than he is willing to lose—it is certain that he is not to be believed: for if that sum be so

indifferent to him, why is not he easy to be tempted to give such a sum to the poor?—to give that sum?—his sport will not be the less, if that be all he designs. . . . Whenever the case is this or like this, he sins that plays at cards or dice or any other game for money. It is alike in all games, for I know no difference; money is the way to abuse them all: and cards and dice, if there be no money at stake, will make as good sport, and please the mind as well as any of the sports of boys, and are as innocent as pushpin."

The third of the particular species of contract that we are considering is that of betting. A bet is a contract made between certain parties upon some undetermined event, by which they will lose or gain according to the result. The same arguments as those employed to justify gambling may be used to defend betting. The moralists, however, while allowing that to make a bet is not in itself sinful, require the following conditions:—

1. The subject of the bet must not be sinful, nor an incentive to sin.

2. The event must be really uncertain for both parties.

3. The bet must be understood in the same sense by both parties, and the loser must be prepared to pay.

There is another point also that deserves careful attention: it is that the person who bets must use his *own* money for the purpose, and he

must be perfectly free so to use it. Obviously, it would be quite wrong for a cashier, say, to use his employer's money for betting purposes : such an act would be common theft. Also the father of a family would sin against the Fifth Commandment by wagering money which is required for the support of his household. And experience shows that this is just what does happen when betting and gambling become a habit ; consequently moralists, while admitting that betting under certain conditions is not wrong in itself, condemn the habit of gambling. The gambler commits two great sins against society. He substitutes gaming for honest work, wasting his time and opportunities which are given him by God to employ to His honour and glory, and the well-being of his fellow men. He is also a non-producer ; he contributes nothing to the wealth of the society to which he belongs, but, on the contrary, tries to make a combination of chance and skill transfer part of that wealth to himself.

This chapter would not be complete without at least a passing reference to the common custom of speculating in stocks and shares. It is always difficult for an outsider to grasp the technicalities of business methods, and still more difficult for him to state them briefly. An attempt, however, must be made to describe the custom to which reference is now made. A person agrees to purchase a hundred shares from another person, say, in three months' time at ten shillings per share. On that

date, if the market price is higher, the seller pays the difference, if it is lower the buyer has to pay it. There are many variations of this kind of speculation in "options" and "futures," which space forbids us discussing in detail, but the fact is plain that these operations are nothing more nor less than gambling, the market price being made use of as a matter for wager. The method is open to all the charges previously enumerated against gambling, and in addition it creates a fictitious demand and supply, thus falsifying prices. In the case of operations in food supplies the prices are often inflated, and an act of injustice is done against the consumer, who has to pay more for his food in consequence. This deserves our serious consideration. There is something wrong with the moral sense of a community which receives with open arms the gambler on the Stock Exchange, admitting him to the "best society," and electing him as sidesman or warden in the church, and at the same time ostracizing the bookmaker on the racecourse, who offers fair odds to his clients, and pays his debts with scrupulous fairness.

CHAPTER VI

Sunday Observance

Environment and its effect in the political, social, and religious sphere—The War and Sunday Observance—But the problem is really a hundred years old—The Sunday of mediaeval England—The Puritan Sunday—The modern mind in revolt against it—The sermon no longer the power that it was—Our present environment has also broken down the old-fashioned attitude towards Sunday recreation—How are we to meet the changed conditions?—The Catholic teaching on the positive obligation of the Sunday Mass—Misunderstandings considered—The way to meet the problem—A plea for short services—The place of the sermon in worship—The provision of godly recreation considered—A modern rural Catholic parish.

IT will not be disputed that all great wars contain within themselves the germs of revolution, not only in the political and social but also in the religious sphere. One of the chief causes of this is to be found in the change of environment. Under conditions of peace the social environment alters but slowly, and, in consequence, the corresponding adaptation is usually gradual. The current sets in for better or for worse, and bears us along with it, until one day we realize that the change has been indeed profound, though we had not noticed it

before. In time of war, however, our environment is altered fundamentally and almost instantaneously ; we find ourselves torn up by the roots and transplanted into an entirely new set of conditions. Hence the mental revolution. Men cannot live long out of harmony with their environment, they must either alter it or accommodate themselves to it.

This fact, there can be no doubt, has been at the bottom of many, if not all, of the revolutionary proposals which have been made during the past five years in matters affecting Christian worship and discipline. " Our environment has radically changed," says the progressive religious thinker, " and we must quickly accommodate ourselves to the altered conditions or go under." It need not, then, cause us any surprise (although we may indeed disagree) when we find well-known Catholic priests telling us that we ought seriously to reconsider our position regarding such a matter of discipline as evening Communion ; such is the attitude taken by Canon Hepher in his book *The Re-evangelization of England.*

Also, from the nature of things, we were led to expect that the question of Sunday observance would once more be brought out into the open and a restatement demanded. We were not long disappointed. Chaplains at the front found themselves suddenly placed in an entirely new and hitherto unknown environment. The old-fashioned, respectable, sleepy English Sunday was for them a thing of the past. The padre

rose to the occasion : on Sunday afternoon he put on his football "shorts" and played his best ; in the evening he was even to be seen presiding at the "smoker" he had organized during the week. Then came the question to himself and to others, "Will things ever be the same as they were ? Can we go back to the old régime ?" Many answered in the negative, and an outspoken sermon preached in one of our well-known London churches provided good "copy" for the secular Press because of its fearless advocacy of Sunday games and amusements.

So the question of Sunday observance has once more become a problem of the day. We may indeed welcome the fact ; it is a matter upon which clear thinking is badly needed. The pity is that nothing less than a great European war was necessary in order to bring us face to face with our true position. The problem that forces itself upon us to-day is wellnigh one hundred years old, it began in the year 1829, when George Stephenson, by the invention of his locomotive engine the "Rocket," revolutionized our whole environment ; few, if any, of the clergy of that day realized what far-reaching consequences this invention would have on Sunday observance. Let us try very briefly to trace it out.

Cardinal Gasquet, in one of his historical studies, has given us a delightful picture of the religion of mediaeval England ; it may be that he has painted it in colours too bright, but one thing is certain—there was no difficulty in

getting people to observe Sunday in those days. Every one, young and old, flocked to Mass as a matter of course when they heard the church bell ring ; the parish church was their spiritual home, it was full of sacred memories for them, and most of the furniture it contained had been made by the forbears of those who worshipped therein. The same family feeling was preserved when later, on the Sunday afternoon, the parish priest and his flock met on the village green, and the young people showed their skill in wrestling, singlestick, or archery.

This, to us Catholics, delightful picture of Sunday observance was ruthlessly destroyed by the advent of Puritanism. The altars were torn down, the pictures and shrines destroyed, and the bare walls of the church daubed with whitewash ; in the place of the Mass, with its simple and beautiful ceremonial, was substituted the long and dreary sermon, and all Sunday games and innocent amusements were strictly forbidden. But one thing did remain unchanged, there was no diminution in church attendance, the congregations were as large as in former days.

This may, at first sight, cause some surprise, but the reason is not far to seek—it was because the environment still remained the same. People went to church because there was nothing else for them to do ; the majority could neither read nor write, and if they could there was little for them to read, and no penny post to carry the letters they wrote. Generally speaking, the

incumbent was the only educated man in the parish, and his sermons the only means of learning what was going on in the world outside. Many individuals, no doubt, attended church to worship God after the Puritan fashion, but all would look upon it as an agreeable meeting-place for hearing the happenings of the time.

Now the invention of the steam-engine has changed all this, and gradually during the past century our environment has fundamentally altered. And the changed conditions have attacked and conquered the two great strongholds of Protestantism; the sermon, and the distinctive attitude towards Sunday recreation, the modern mind is in revolt against both of them. The sermon, nowadays, must be exceptionally brilliant if it is going to attract the average man or woman, and the reason for this is plain; the old Puritan preacher had no rivals in the field, but we have many. Our people are more or less educated, some of them spend a considerable amount of this leisure time in reading, and, if their tastes lie in that direction, the obliging modern publisher can supply them with hundreds of volumes of sermons at a cheap rate which are far better than they are likely to hear from the pulpit of their parish church. Why, then, go to church if the sermon is the main object? Neither do they need to go there to hear the news; every Sunday morning the successor to Stephenson's "Rocket" brings them all the news of the world damp from the printing

press in London, and even at present prices it can be obtained for twopence. We must have something more than the sermon and news in order to induce people to come to church.

In the same way our present environment has broken down the old-time attitude towards Sunday recreations, the Catholic is not necessarily distressed about it because he does not believe that Sunday should be spent as the Puritans advocated; but it is significant that many modern Protestants, particularly amongst the younger generation, are in open revolt against strict Sabbatarian principles, it is left almost entirely to the ministers and elderly people to maintain the old traditions. The new school are quite loyal to the general principles of Protestantism, but they maintain that under the present conditions of strain and concentration it is not only allowable but necessary that they should have recreation on Sunday. They point out that all the week they are cooped up in offices or factories, they are continuously working at great pressure, and when the week end comes it is a physical necessity that they should seek change in such recreations as golf, motoring, or the like. The workman, as well as the master, advances the same arguments, and every inducement is offered to him to gratify his desire for pleasure. Owing to the change that has taken place in our industrial organization during the past century our cities have grown out of all recognition, and regularly every Sunday they are half emptied of their work-people, who

are carried into the country by organized motor charabanc excursions; for those who remain there is provided the attraction of the Sunday evening concert.

An accumulation of facts such as these provides ample material for serious thought; neither Catholic nor Protestant can possibly be contented to let the matter stand as it is, the environment is too strong for both of us, and, unless we are to be swamped by it, we must have some definite constructive policy. I may be wrong, but I believe that our modern social conditions are far more responsible for our half empty churches than any growth in active unbelief or materialism. We may indeed regret that we did not discover earlier the corroding influence of our changed environment upon religious observance, but regret over the past is simply vain regret unless it provides us with a lesson for the future.

We may safely leave, I think, our Protestant brethren to grapple with their own difficulties, and set ourselves the task of putting our own house in order. I believe that our future, as Catholics, is distinctly hopeful if we will only teach fearlessly and candidly the traditional Catholic belief with regard to Sunday observance. On few matters is the teaching of the Catholic Church clearer than on that of the observance of Sunday. She lays down as a positive obligation that the faithful shall hear Mass every Sunday, and observe that day as one of rest from servile

work. The obligation to hear Mass is "grave," and cannot be neglected *under pain of sin* except for good and sufficient cause.

The exceptions are conveniently summarized by Fr. Slater as follows: "Any serious inconvenience or loss, spiritual or temporal, affecting one's self or one's neighbour, which would follow from hearing Mass, will excuse the faithful from fulfilling the obligation. So that the sick, the convalescent who could not venture out of doors without danger, those who have the care of the sick, mothers of families who have little children to attend to, those who live at such a distance that it would take them more than an hour to walk to church; all these are excused from hearing Mass regularly." So also the precept of resting from servile work admits of reasonable and just exceptions. Such is the description, by a modern moralist, of the custom which has been universal from the ages of antiquity, and seems specially fitted to meet our present-day difficulties.

No well-informed Churchman, I suppose, would deny *in toto* either the justice of the original precept or the sweet reasonableness of the exceptions made to the rule. And yet, when we come down to practical details, we find considerable divergence of opinion; let us examine some of these, and try, if possible, to ascertain their cause. In the first place, there seems to be considerable confusion of thought on the matter. When the present writer told

a friend that he intended to include a chapter on "Sunday Observance" in this volume the reply came instantly "I hope you are not going to advocate the Continental Sunday." He was thinking, of course, of the Parisian boulevards and their glaring cafés, of noisy drinking and dancing saloons, and of Sunday afternoon race-meetings. No priest, I hope, would advocate this. No attempt is here made to present a brief either for the "Continental Sunday" in this sense of the term, nor are we going to uphold the "Puritanical Sunday," with its soul-destroying inertia. Both conceptions have obvious faults ; the former errs by excess, the latter by defect. We must aim at re-establishing the real "Catholic Sunday" under the changed conditions in which we find ourselves placed.

And this is where we come to close grips with our problem. The social environment, as has been shown, has for a long time past been slowly but surely changing ; the war only speeded up the change. Whether we like it or not, the old-fashioned English Sunday has gone never to come back again ; it is well for us to realize the fact and hasten to accommodate ourselves to the new environment. We have delayed too long, and have lost many people in consequence : in the future we must deal with the matter with a firmer and surer hand. I would submit that the true and only way to grapple with the difficulty is to teach fearlessly and frankly the positive obligation of attendance at Mass. Is

it not true that at the bottom we clergy fear the secularization of Sunday because we have not got, in any marked degree amongst our people, this bulwark of *the idea of positive obligation* with which to oppose it? Once Catholics have realized that to abstain from divine worship on Sunday is to rob God of something which is His due, and therefore a sin, we can leave the question of amusement to take care of itself.

This may appear to some readers to be a strong and dogmatic way of stating the case, but present dangers need drastic measures. We English people have much to unthink in this matter; our mental perspective has been seriously distorted by three centuries of Puritan influence. There are thousands of English Catholics to-day who would be profoundly shocked if one suggested to them after the Sunday evening's supper a game of chess or whist; and the same people will neglect, with hardly a passing qualm of conscience, and for the most trivial of reasons, their serious obligation of being present at the Lord's Service on the Lord's Day. This is a *hysteron-proteron*; the cart is before the horse; the perspective is wrong.

It may be asked, "But what authority have we to teach that a person who omits Sunday Mass without just cause commits sin?" The reply is that we have the strongest authority. The Church in England professes her loyalty to primitive custom, and we have ample evidence (quite apart from the continued steadfastness of

the Apostolic Church in the "breaking of bread") that during the "first six centuries" the rule of Sunday observance was then what it is now. Justin Martyr, who lived in the middle of the second century, describes in his *Apology* the worship of the early Christians, and that worship is the Mass. The Council of Elvira (A.D. 300) decreed: "If any one in the city do neglect to come to church for three Sundays, let him for a short time be excommunicated, in order that he may be corrected." And in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, at the end of the fourth century, both the hearing of Mass and rest from work is prescribed; and the rule is attributed to the Apostles. Reference to any good Church history will supply additional instances.

This is the main thesis that I have attempted to establish in this chapter—that the proper way to resist the desecration of Sunday is to teach that worship is a *duty* owed to God, and because it is a duty he who neglects his duty sins. Many other and interesting questions surround our subject with which it is impossible now to deal in detail. We must, however, notice in conclusion one or two important corollaries which follow on our general conclusion.

If it is the duty of the faithful to attend the Sunday Mass, it is also the duty of the clergy to study their convenience as much as possible. We are naturally, and no doubt rightly, very conservative on the question of the time and arrangement of our services; and the writer

has no wish to offer advice to individual priests; each one must consider the particular circumstances under which he works, and decide accordingly. There seems no doubt that we must be prepared to offer our people shorter services than has been the rule heretofore. Some of our bishops are strangely reluctant to realize this, and insist that their priests shall day after day and week after week recite the Ten Commandments at Mass; still more do they object to the ancient Catholic custom of omitting the Creed and *Gloria* on ferial days. This, I am quite convinced, is a great mistake; after twelve years' work in a slum parish it has been made plain to me that the only way to get working people to attend a daily Mass is to offer them a service which does not last longer than twenty-five or thirty minutes. The same applies to the principal Sunday Mass. It ought to be over, sermon included, well within the hour; by omitting the Commandments and by using plain-chant settings for the Creed and *Gloria* this is quite possible.

It is the fashion with some clergy to lament the strong desire of the present day for short services, and to contrast present conditions with the times of our grandfathers. The comparison is unfair, the environment has changed, we live in the days of wireless telegraphy and aeroplanes, and many people cannot possibly spare the time a long service demands. It must also be remembered that in our cities the parochial system has

largely broken down in recent times; many members of the congregation come from a considerable distance to church, and the journey takes up a large amount of their available time. Then again we must strive to resist the temptation to impose a double obligation upon our people: that of making their Communion, and afterwards attending an elaborate sung Mass, at the sacred hour of eleven o'clock; many people find this quite impossible, and rightly resent being urged to do more than it is in their power to perform.

We may also have to consider the advisability (under proper authority) of separating the sermon from the Mass, placing it after or before Mass instead of after the Creed. It is not an experiment that would be made without due and careful reflection, but there seems to be much in its favour, and it would enable those who cannot spare the time for hearing a sermon at least to fulfil their obligation. We may even be driven, by our changing environment, to provide godly recreation for our people on Sunday in order to counteract the ungodly recreation provided elsewhere. The whole question, at any rate, is deserving of the serious attention both of the clergy and the faithful laity.

Much that has been written in this chapter, both by way of criticism and also on the constructive side, applies only to the conditions of town life; it is hardly to be expected that a priest who has spent all his time in large cities should

feel himself competent either to appreciate the great difficulties under which the country clergy work, or be able to offer any solution of them. Still the writer has dreams at times that the day may still come when our successors, if not ourselves, will see a restoration of the state of rural religious life which Cardinal Gasquet so charmingly describes. He knows of at least one village where this happy result has already been achieved.

A description of what happens there each Sunday may not be out of place. The church is a glorious building in the Early English style, and with its present complete appointments for Catholic worship must look much as it did 500 years ago. There is one Mass only on Sunday, and this is always sung to a simple setting well known to the people, and in which all take part. The service begins at nine o'clock, and by that time the church is full of worshippers who have come from all parts of the parish, which is fairly large and scattered. More often than not every one present receives Communion. When Mass is over the priest and his people adjourn to the parish hall, where breakfast is provided. This is always a very happy meal, and when it is finished half an hour or so is spent in further social intercourse. On occasions, I believe, the sermon is postponed until after breakfast, and then the villagers go back again into the church. The other Sunday activities need no special comment.

One is tempted to ask why this kind of thing cannot become more common in our villages; the advantages are obvious, and, in the case we are considering at any rate, the problem of Sunday observance seems to have been solved. The country clergy have much to discourage them, more than we town priests either realize or understand. But, who knows! perhaps it may be they who will first achieve the object at which all Catholics are aiming — the revival of our nation's love for the holy Mass—if only they will keep the vision clearly before them, and persist amidst the many difficulties with which they have to contend.

CHAPTER VII

The Last Anointing

The revival of Unction in the English Church—The two conflicting opinions which constitute the "problem"—Is it possible to accept the view that the anointing of the sick is primarily for the purpose of restoration to bodily health?—Difficulties to be faced if this view is accepted—A consideration of the text, S. James v. 14–16—The historical evidence up to the eighth century—The miracle-working healings by holy persons—Can these be considered as a continuation of the Jacobean rite?—*The Sacramentary of Serapion* — Pope Innocent's letter to Decentius—The evidence of the Venerable Bede—Abuses which arose in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—The practical importance of the problem—Literature.

WHEN the Form for the Anointing of the Sick, which appeared in the English Prayer Book of 1549, was withdrawn in the 1552 revision, the practice itself fell into disuse in this country, although some of the Scottish bishops in the eighteenth century still continued to bless oil both for Confirmation and the Unction of the Sick. Happier conditions have prevailed in the last two generations, and we have witnessed a revival of the use of that sacrament which Bishop Forbes aptly described as "the lost Pleiad of the Anglican firmament." But signs are by no means wanting—perhaps

they must be expected to appear in view of the difficulties which surround the historical side of the question—that two different opinions are prevalent amongst us regarding the effects of the sacrament, and consequently the conditions under which it should be administered.

These two positions may be stated briefly as follows: There are those who maintain that the primary object of the anointing of the sick is restoration to bodily health; on this view the rite becomes a "sacramental" for the supernatural healing of the body, and may be administered in any of those cases where we should feel justified in calling in medical aid. Others, however, prefer to hold to the opinion which has been traditional in Western Christendom at least from the time when the theology of the seven sacraments crystallized out in scholastic scholarship, and which is embodied in the teaching of the greatest of the Western theologians, S. Thomas Aquinas. According to this view the last anointing, now called the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, is essentially a sacrament of the New Law, and its effects are primarily spiritual and not physical; it remits sin, infuses sanctifying grace, thus inspiring the sick person with confidence in God's mercy, and occasionally and conditionally brings about a restoration of bodily health.

It will be seen at a glance, I think, that these two views are essentially in opposition to each other; it is quite true that they have a common origin — the Jacobean exhortation,

"Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord"—but the object with which the anointing is performed is fundamentally different, and this is bound to exercise far-reaching consequences in the practical administration of the rite. In this chapter an attempt will be made to support the Thomist doctrine of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, it may be well to state definitely that it is not denied that restoration to bodily health is one of the effects of the sacrament; what is questioned is that it consists essentially in being a supernatural means of restoration to physical health.

This latter position is advocated and defended by Fr. F. W. Puller, S.S.J.E., in his book *The Anointing of the Sick in Scripture and Tradition*, and his able advocacy is no doubt responsible for many of the clergy supporting this view. His contentions may indeed be taken as representative of this position, and, as such, we will examine them in more detail. Fr. Puller gives in the ninth chapter of his book his reasons for believing that it is "specially desirable that the usage of anointing the sick should be authoritatively revived at the present time." And these reasons show us, quite apart from the main body of his thesis, the particular value he believes can be obtained from the administration of the rite.

First and foremost, he advocates a restoration

of the anointing of the sick because it would stimulate a belief in the power of prayer, "and more especially in the power of prayer for temporal blessings," which is sadly neglected at the present time. "I do not doubt," he says, "that the revival of the practice of anointing the sick with the view to their recovery would, if it so pleased God, stir people up to pray, and would protect the Christian teaching about the power of prayer" (p. 304). He even goes so far as to say that "when our Lord guided S. James to enjoin the use of unction in his Epistle, He foresaw that it would be well that this rite, which tends to stimulate prayer, should be connected with times of sickness" (p. 305). Fr. Puller's position is quite clear: he considers that the real aim of the anointing of the sick is to restore the sick person, by the power of prayer, to physical health; that is why it should be performed.

Now, to my mind, it is plain that the Jacobean command is intended to be a permanent part of the existing Church order, and as such is to be used in all cases of sickness. Obviously, if this is the case, it could not be expected that every sick person anointed, or even the majority of those anointed, should recover their bodily health. As a matter of fact, experience has shown that this is not the case; the sick do occasionally recover, but not in such numbers as would lead us to conclude that we have here a supernatural means of restoration to bodily

health ; if this were so the fact would have been established ages ago. There seems also to be a lack of proportion in the prominence given to the temporal blessings to be derived from prayer in connection with this rite. The great masters of the science of prayer tell us that all rightly-intentioned petitions are answered for our ultimate spiritual well-being ; but the same unqualified statement may not be made with regard to temporal blessings ; we are especially warned against judging the efficacy of our prayers by the temporal blessings received ; we must always include in our petitions the qualifying clause "Thy will be done." Once admit, however, the Thomist view that the effect of the sacrament, in common with all the sacraments, is primarily spiritual and these difficulties cease to exist.[1]

Another reason which Fr. Puller advances for the restoration of unction is that it will counteract the dangers which arise from the wrong teaching of such sects as "the Peculiar People" and the "Faith Healers," who also anoint their sick. This we should willingly admit to be the case, provided the sacrament were restored with the distinct understanding that its effects are first

[1] After this chapter had been drafted in outline I read the excellent article on "Extreme Unction" in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*. The writer criticizes Fr. Puller's position, and in many respects his arguments confirm those I have used. I have also derived much help from Kern's *'De Sacramento Extremae Unctionis*, which was published at Ratisbon in 1907, after Fr. Puller's book was written.

and foremost in the spiritual sphere. But it is hard to see how this desirable result would be brought about if we adopted Fr. Puller's view. Our complaint against the "Faith Healers" and such-like people is that they exaggerate out of all proportion the importance of the physical health of the body, and that to the serious neglect of what we consider to be paramount, the spiritual health of the soul. And this is precisely the danger that is to be feared from Fr. Puller's position ; the emphasis is on the wrong side ; the body comes first, the soul is only second.

His final reason is a direct attack upon the sacramental doctrine which is advocated in this chapter, and which Fr. Puller calls "the Roman teaching," an expression I cannot allow to pass unchallenged, since the teaching of the Eastern Church is equally sacramental in character. "And again, some of our clergy," says Fr. Puller, "seeing the plain injunction about Unction in the pages of their New Testament, jump hastily to the conclusion that the Roman teaching is right ; and seek to revive the use of Unction as a channel of sanctifying grace, believing that grace is imparted sacramentally through the oil as a preparation for death. This mistake is likely to grow if it is not taken in hand" (p. 307). The present writer freely admits that the view Fr. Puller condemns is held by him, and he is encouraged by the thought that it is growing in Anglican circles ;

but he certainly has not "jumped hastily to the conclusion that the Roman teaching is right." He has only arrived at it after much anxious study of a very perplexing question. It is hoped that Fr. Puller's objection to the sacramental view of the Unction of the Sick will be answered in what follows.

Let us now proceed to a consideration of the test passage of Scripture upon which the whole matter rests, S. James v. 14–16 : "Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the Church ; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord : and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up ; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." What was the dominant idea in the writer's mind in suggesting to his readers the procedure recorded?

It will hardly be disputed that the chapter in which the text occurs relates as a whole to spiritual matters. The Epistle was written in those early Apostolic days when the Second Advent was believed to be imminent, and spiritual interests were paramount. After exhorting his readers to be patient and long-suffering, the writer proceeds to give his instructions regarding the care of the sick. In examining these we must notice first of all that the words ἀσθενεῖ τις and κάμνοντα imply that the person is suffering from a serious illness ; it is no slight ailment ; this is also supported by

the injunction that the elders are to be called in; the sick person is unable to go to them. This agrees with the Thomist doctrine that the "subject" of Extreme Unction must be suffering from serious bodily illness. But it is against the non-sacramental view, for, if the healing of the body is of first importance, the anointing could be used in the same way as we apply other medicinal remedies, and even for slight ailments.

Then, again, the expression τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους evidently refers, not to any staid elderly person, but to the Church officials, as is made clear by the addition τῆς ἐκκλησιας—"the elders of the Church." This is in strict agreement with the scholastic teaching that the "minister" of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction must be a priest; it is sacramental in its nature, and requires an official of the Church for its administration. But if we are to suppose that the rite exists primarily for the healing of the body, and that its administration is confined to the clergy, it seems to be a necessary corollary that all the clergy have the "gift of healing." Fr. Puller recognizes that this conclusion may be drawn, but thinks that "S. James' statement may be explained without any introduction of the idea involved in the word χάρισμα" (p. 291). He does not give any reason for this statement, but, accepting for the sake of argument "the objector's view," proceeds to point out that in various ordinals, including the form for ordaining exorcists in the Roman Church, the grace of healing is

mentioned. It is not too much to say that the acceptance of the belief that the clergy, as a class, possess the gift of physical healing would entirely revolutionize our conception of the priestly office. Such an opinion is not held by any part of the Catholic Church; the first duty of the priest is to minister to the souls of men.

The next point to consider is the close association, in the text, of the particular command to anoint with the remission of sin; this is of the greatest importance. The text reads: "and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him." And in the immediate context (verse 16) ἰαθῆτε is obviously "healed from sin." This seems to state as plainly as is possible that the anointing has a definite spiritual effect, the forgiveness of sin, and involves a bestowal of grace, thus supporting the sacramental view of the rite.

It is here that Fr. Puller, in his exegesis of the passage, meets with his greatest difficulty, and does most violence to the context. On the non-sacramental view of the rite he cannot admit that the unction produces the remission of sins, and the consequent infusion of sanctifying grace. Now if the words "and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" could be taken by themselves, and the concluding part of the sentence, "and if he have committed sins, it shall

be forgiven him," be ignored, they might quite well be taken as referring to bodily healing. Fr. Puller, for no other apparent reason than that it suits his purpose, assumes that they can so be taken ; he sweeps aside all grammatical considerations, and the general sequence of the passage ; then, having put a full stop after "and the Lord shall raise him up," he considers all that has gone before without any reference to what follows, and begins a new sentence with "and if he have committed sins," etc. Treating his context in this way he is able to say that the writer's meaning can be given "without ambiguity" as follows : "Is any one among you sick ? Let him call for the presbyters of the Church ; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord ; and the prayer of faith *shall restore to health* him that is ailing, and the Lord *will cause him to recover*"[1] (p. 21). The concluding words of the text are then interpreted as opening out an entirely new line of thought, the Apostle is not now referring to unction at all, but to the Sacrament of Penance.

This arbitrary way of dealing with the context can only satisfy a person who has made up his mind beforehand on the matter ; to me it is incredible, if the Apostolic writer had meant to suggest that the remission of sins had nothing at all to do with the rite of anointing, that he should have expressed himself in the way he did, for it would be certain to give the reader a wrong impression

[1] The italics are Fr. Puller's own.

of the sense in which he intended the passage to be taken.

Before leaving this part of our subject there remain two other expressions which must receive our consideration. First, "the prayer of faith shall save (σώσει) him that is sick," and the one which immediately follows, "and the Lord shall raise him up" (ἐγερεῖ αὐτὸν). With regard to the former, according to other New Testament use, σώσει might refer either to the body or to the soul; and in its present context no one can be blamed if he considers it refers to the soul. As to ἐγερεῖ the New Testament use uniformly suggests the body, except in Romans xiii. 11 and Ephesians v. 14, and these are clearly metaphorical. On the whole the difficulty in taking ἐγερεῖ of the soul seems less than that of taking the rest of the passage of the body. I would contend, therefore, that the chief reference in the whole passage is to the spiritual effects of unction, and that this is of primary importance, however closely bodily effects may be associated with it.

The directions given in S. James' Epistle have been dealt with at some length because of the paucity and uncertainty of the historical evidence between that time and the eighth century. It is best frankly to acknowledge this fact. All that we can say, from the material that has come down to us, is that the Jacobean unction no doubt survived; but side by side with it there were unofficial anointings with oil which were used

with the idea of producing restoration to bodily health. These latter anointings were usually performed by some person of great reputed holiness (not always a cleric), or with oil that had been blessed by him, and seem to be clearly of the nature of "saint-miracles," and as such ought not to be confused—as they often are by those who hold the non-sacramental view—with the official unction of the Church.

It is this confusion between the miracle-working healings (so plentiful in hagiographical writings) and the Jacobean rite that has in a large measure been responsible, I think, for the view this chapter opposes. I hope to make this clear by considering a few examples, selected at random from Fr. Puller's book. The fourth chapter is headed "Historical Instances of the Administration of Unction to the Sick," and both the title and the contents of the chapter show that the writer considers them to be examples of the Jacobean unction.

The first case recorded is that of a certain Bishop of Lampsacus who flourished in the middle of the fourth century; he was a saint named Parthenius. One day he found lying in the church "a certain man who was altogether withered"; the saint was moved to tears at the sight and called for some oil; then falling upon his knees he prayed to God for the sick man: "Then getting up, he gently and gradually softened the man's body with the holy oil (*sensim et paullatim eum sancto oleo molliens*), and straightway

made him to rise up healed, and bade him go on foot to his friends, glorifying God." [1]

Very similar to the foregoing incident is the record of a miracle of healing by S. Martin, Bishop of Tours. A girl is suffering from paralysis, and, moved by the entreaties of her father, the saint goes to her home. On entering the house he casts himself down on the ground and prays, and then: "He requests that oil should be given him. When he had blessed it, he poured a quantity of the holy liquid (*vim sancti liquoris*) into the mouth of the girl, and immediately her voice returned to her. Then gradually, through contact with him, her limbs began one by one to recover life; till at last, in the presence of the people, her feet having been strengthened, she arose." [2] Other miracles of a like nature are attributed to S. Martin; they are all clearly miracles of healing due to the personal sanctity of him who performs them, and cannot be quoted as examples of the Jacobean anointing.

Still more may this be said of a miracle attributed to that sturdy old dweller in the desert, S. Pachomius, who was not even in Holy Orders. A man came to S. Pachomius' monastery one day, and begged the saint to heal his daughter, who was suffering from epileptic fits—described in the language of the time as "possessed by a demon." Some time afterwards "Pachomius

[1] *Vit. S. Parthen.* cap. iii. 22, *Acta SS.*, tom. ii. Febr., p. 42.

[2] Sulpic. Sever. *de vita B. Martini*, cap. xvi, *P.L.* xx. 169.

sent to the father some oil consecrated by his benediction (*oleum benedictione sua consecratum*). The man, nothing doubting, anointed his daughter all over with that same oil, and merited to see her restored in a little while to the health which she had formerly enjoyed." [1]

One other example may be given. S. John of Lycopolis in the Thebaid, renowned as a great prophet and recluse, was visited in A.D. 394 by a party of seven persons who came from Jerusalem. While the pilgrims were having their first interview with the Blessed John, one of the party was grievously afflicted with a tertian fever; his companions begged the man of God to heal him. The saint, after telling the sick man that he was desirous of getting rid of a chastisement which might be very useful to his soul, "blessed some oil, and gave it to him. When the invalid had been thoroughly anointed with the oil, he forthwith vomited out all the excess of bile ; and having been perfectly restored to health, he returned on foot to the place where he was lodging." [2] Many other instances are given, down to the eighth century, in Fr. Puller's book, and still more are to be found in the *Acta Sanctorum* ; they all belong to the same category ; they are miracles of healing by holy people, both clerics and lay-folk, and not examples of the normal use of the rite of anointing the sick.

The importance of attempting to obtain

[1] *Vit. S. Pachom.* 30, *Acta SS.*, tom. iii. Mai., p. 308.

[2] *Hist. Monach.* cap. i. *ap. Rufin. Opp., P.L.* xxi. 394.

a correct exegesis of S. James v. 14–16 is manifest when we come to consider the historical evidence available before the end of the eighth century. As already stated, this evidence is very scanty, and, in many cases where it seems to exist, it is doubtful whether the reference is to the Jacobean anointing or not. The silence of the early Christian writers with regard to this subject is difficult to understand, and the formulating of theories to account for it must be left to the expert in early Church history. It has been suggested that the loss of many early commentaries by the Fathers upon S. James' Epistle, except for a few fragments, may be the real explanation.[1]

We find, however, that the rite of anointing the sick survived amongst the Nestorian and Monophysite sects, which separated from the Church in the fifth century; and also that it has been in continuous use and recognized as a sacrament by the Orthodox Eastern Churches and by the Latin Church in spite of their having been separated since A.D. 869. This shows that there must have been a tradition common to all these bodies before the dates mentioned, although the references to it in their literature are so scanty.

No attempt can be made in an article of this description to offer an exhaustive examination of the historical evidence; the reader must be referred for that to Kern's work *De Sacramento*

[1] *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Article, "Extreme Unction," Vol. V., p. 718.

Extremae Unctionis; only a few of the more important documents can be mentioned here. The writings of both Origen and Tertullian contain indirect references to what appears to be the Jacobean anointing; but they give us little information as to the current beliefs respecting the effect of that anointing. It is in that valuable document the *Sacramentary of Serapion* that we first come across a point of real interest. The seventeenth of a series of prayers is entitled "A Prayer for Oil of the Sick, or for Bread, or for Water"; it is very long and very quaintly worded.[1] In this prayer God is asked "to send out a healing power of the Only-begotten from heaven upon the oil"; it is to be used, amongst other things, "for good grace and remission of sins (*εἰς χάριν ἀγαθην και ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτημάτων*), for a medicine of life and salvation (*σωτηρίας*), for health and soundness in all their parts of soul, body, spirit, for perfect strengthening."

This is very significant; there is a clear and definite expression of the view that the unction is expected to produce spiritual effects; it is not only for soundness of body, but for the soul and spirit as well; and, what is still more important for our purpose, it expressly states that the anointing is for "a good grace and *remission of sins*." It is disappointing to find that Fr. Puller, in order to maintain his non-sacramental position, refuses to give a full and frank recognition to

[1] The full Greek text and a translation are given by Fr. Puller in his book.

this. Without a scrap of evidence to support the statement, he boldly asserts that these words must have been interpolated by some scribe writing at a later date when the sacramental view had become popular! Such special pleading does far more harm than good; it weakens even the strongest case, and is against the interests of true impartial inquiry.

From the fourth to the seventh century references to the use of unction are more numerous, and they show that the practice was spread over the whole of the Church. Its spiritual effects, strengthening and sanctification and remission of sins, are mentioned: and also in many cases it is urged that the faithful should use it for restoration to bodily health, instead of resorting to superstitious practices. We can only consider here the well-known letter of Pope Innocent I to Decentius, Bishop of Eugubium, written A.D. 416. It is a reply to various questions which have been put to his Metropolitan by Decentius, and amongst them is one regarding who are fit persons to receive unction.

Dr. Gibson, in his *Thirty-nine Articles*, refers to this letter, and concludes that the very fact of the question being asked "is fatal to any claim for this religious unction to be regarded as *primitive*"; and he quotes Bishop Harold Browne in support of his contention. It is very difficult to understand how such a conclusion can be drawn in the face of the other and cumulative evidence which is available.

And the document itself shows that all that Decentius is asking is for some regulation in the matter ; such questions are to be expected, for history shows that later Church discipline is the result of a slow and gradual evolution.

The reply of Innocent is too long to quote in full ; it is given in the original by Dr. Gibson (p. 606), and is translated by Fr. Puller (p. 54). The Pope says that the oil must be blessed by a bishop, but that it can be administered by a priest, or even—so it seems, although the sense is perhaps a little obscure—by a layman or the sick person himself. It can, however, only be administered to the *sick faithful* ; it must be denied to those who are under canonical penance. And the reason for this denial is very significant : "For this unction cannot be given to those who are doing penance, seeing that it is a sacrament (*quia genus sacramenti est*). For how can it be supposed that one sacrament (*unum genus*) may be granted to those to whom the other sacraments are denied." No one would, of course, maintain that this proves that Innocent held the later scholastic view of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction ; but it does show that he regarded the anointing as having a sacramental value, and could not be given to those who had forfeited their right to receive the Holy Eucharist and other Christian privileges.

We must now pass on to the evidence of the Venerable Bede, which will conclude our brief

survey of the historical evidence to the end of the eighth century. In his commentary on S. James' Epistle Bede[1] tells us that as in the time of the Apostles, so "at the present time it remains the custom of the Church that the sick should be anointed by the priests with consecrated oil, and, through the accompanying prayer, be restored to health." He holds that the laity may use the oil for anointing provided it has been consecrated by a bishop; and names Pope Innocent as his authority for this statement. He then comments on the words "And if he be in sins, they shall be remitted to him." Sin committed in the soul, he says, can produce bodily sickness or even death, as is shown by 1 Corinthians xi. 30: "If therefore the sick be in sins, and shall have confessed these to the priests of the Church, and shall have undertaken seriously to relinquish and amend them, they shall be remitted to them. For sins cannot be remitted without confession of amendment. Hence the injunction is rightly added: 'Confess therefore your sins one to another.'"

It is not very easy to gather, from S. Bede's commentary, what was the recognized teaching on the benefits to be derived from the anointing of the sick. It seems certain that the unction was considered to be a complement of the Sacrament of Penance, and this may account for the confusion which certainly exists in Bede's

[1] Bede, *Exposit. super Div. Jacob Epist. P.L.*, xciii. 39.

writing regarding the effects produced. Fr. Puller claims Bede as supporting his non-sacramental view. "As we might expect," he says, "he attributes the remission of sins, about which S. James writes, to the Sacrament of Penance and not to unction." The writer of the article on "Extreme Unction" in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* replies to Fr. Puller as follows: "It should be observed that in asserting the necessity of confessing post-baptismal sins, a necessity recognized in Catholic teaching, Bede *does not deny* that the unction *also* may be efficacious in remitting them, or at least in completing their remission, or in remitting the lighter daily sins which need not be confessed. The bodily sickness which the unction is intended to heal is regarded by S. Bede as being, often, at any rate, the effect of sin; and it is interesting to notice that Amalarius of Metz, writing a century later with this passage of Bede before him, expressly attributes to the unction not only the healing of sickness due to the unworthy reception of the Eucharist, but the remission of daily sins." The quotation is then given in full.

Whatever may be the right explanation of S. Bede's view, the commentary at any rate shows us that the theology of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction was still in his day in a fluid state. Modern historical research has revealed to us that the theology of all the sacraments has passed through this stage, and it is no longer possible for the opponents of Catholic dogma to demand

that the Fathers and the early theologians should use the terms of the Schoolmen in order to prove that a rite is "primitive." All that is required, in the present case, is to show that the unction referred to in S. James' Epistle was intended to imply a bestowal of sacramental grace, and that the Church throughout the subsequent centuries used the rite in accordance with this original idea. A consideration of the historical evidence at our disposal, complicated and obscure as it is, seems to warrant the view that the Jacobean anointing was sacramental in its origin, and was so considered until it finally crystallized out in the precise definitions of the Schoolmen. It is from the ninth century onwards that we find ourselves treading on more certain ground, and those who are opposed to the scholastic teaching admit that the strictly sacramental idea of the Jacobean rite is by then established both in the writings of the theologians and in the legislation of the Church. In the *Summa Theologica* of S. Thomas Aquinas the theology of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, which afterwards received the official confirmation of the whole Latin Church at the Council of Trent, is clearly and definitely formulated.[1]

This chapter would not be complete without some reference to an interesting, if regrettable, state of affairs which came about in the twelfth

[1] I have discussed in some detail the Thomist teaching on this sacrament in my *Manual for Confessors* (Knott, 1916, p. 286, et seq.).

and thirteenth centuries. It can only be described as a gross abuse of the sacrament, and as such, I think, has contributed in no small degree to the growth of the view which I have found reason to oppose ; it is, in fact, a revolt against this abuse. In the first place certain theologians—foremost amongst whom was Duns Scotus and his school —taught that the chief effect of the sacrament was the final remission of venial sins, and consequently it ought not to be administered except to those who could not possibly recover or ever sin again. Then vulgar superstitions began to grow around the rite, such as the belief that a person who had been anointed, if he were to recover, could not use the rights of marriage, eat flesh meat, or make a will, etc., without suffering terrible penalties. And, still worse, the clergy refused to administer the rite unless a large fee was paid them for performing it, and consequently only those persons who were in affluent circumstances could afford the privilege. These teachings, superstitions, and abuses, however, formed no permanent part of the doctrine of the schools ; they are now, happily, the relics of a past age, and need only to be considered in relation to their effect upon the thought of the time.

The question raised in this chapter, I think it will be agreed, constitutes a problem of some practical importance ; it is not merely of theoretical interest. We are frankly attempting to revive a rite which has fallen into disuse amongst us, and

our responsibility is great in so doing. What form is this revival going to take? We must certainly make up our minds on the question. Are we going to claim that the anointing of the sick is primarily for the purpose of bodily healing, and accept all that this position implies? It seems, on its own merits and quite apart from any other consideration, a very dangerous claim to make, and open to grave abuse. That "cures" would be obtained I have not the slightest doubt; the activities of our faith healers and mind curers have shown that; but modern psychology has also established that the mind has a wonderful influence upon the body, and it would be difficult to affirm that such cures were of a miraculous order.

We should do well, therefore, to hesitate before affirming that God has ordained the anointing of the sick as a normal and regular means of restoration from sickness; the assumption not only involves a radical readjustment of our view of life, but also negatives the uniform practice of Catholic Christendom since at least the eighth century; we need not emphasize the seriousness of the latter assumption to an instructed Catholic. Is not the teaching of the Schoolmen more reasonable and more in accordance with what we know of the workings of the divine purpose? I would plead, if there is to be a revival of the anointing of the sick amongst us, that it shall be the restoration of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction; and that full recognition shall be

given to the sacramental character of the rite. This seems to be the only safe and reasonable line to adopt.

If the reader is sufficiently interested in the subject to desire to investigate it in more detail I would recommend him to read Puller's *Anointing of the Sick in Scripture and Tradition* side by side with Kern's treatise *De Sacramento Extremae Unctionis Tractatus Dogmaticus* (Ratisbon, 1907). The former is of value because of the original documents quoted in the text and collected at the end of the volume in five appendices ; while the latter gives a modern and scholarly exposition of the whole question. The article in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, which has already been mentioned, is also of great value ; it is written by Dr. Toner, of the Maynooth seminary. As is to be expected it criticizes Fr. Puller severely, but, I think, on the whole fairly. Had I possessed it before drafting the present chapter I should have made more use of its contents. The position of the Eastern Orthodox Church is given in Maltzew's *Die Sakramente der Orthodox-Katholischen Kirche* (Berlin, 1892) ; this work is quoted in Kern, but I have not seen a copy, nor have I been able to obtain one.

CHAPTER VIII

The Vivisection of Animals

The controversy concerning the "Dogs Protection Bill"—The opposing positions stated—Most people have a moral sense respecting the brute creation—The rights of man as compared with the so-called rights of animals—As animals may be used as a means of sustaining life, so they may be used as a means of alleviating human suffering—Our duties respecting animals—Have experiments upon living animals contributed towards the conquest of disease?—The experiments of Galen—Harvey and the circulation of the blood—Major operations in surgery—Abdominal and cranial surgery—Diseases due to bacteria and micro-organisms—The test case of hydrophobia—Experiments now in progress on heart disease—Are the experiments conducted in such a manner that no more pain is caused than is absolutely necessary and unavoidable?—The charges of cruelty brought forward by anti-vivisectionists—A description of a typical experiment upon a dog—Conclusion.

THERE are persons still living who can remember the great agitation against the practice of vivisection which arose in this and other countries in the early "'seventies," and which resulted in the "Cruelty to Animals Act" of 1876. From this date onwards the controversy has increased rather than diminished, and so recently as July, 1919, Parliament was engaged in discussing a Bill introduced by Sir Frederick

Banbury and called the "Dogs Protection Bill," the object of which was to prohibit altogether scientific experiments upon dogs. The medical profession, as a whole, strongly opposed the Bill, and its fate was to be rejected on the third reading; the promoters of the measure, however, were not convinced that their defeat was final, and propose at an early date to bring the whole matter up again, so that the House may reconsider its judgement.

It is an unfortunate feature of this controversy that all along it has been conducted by two comparatively small sections of the community: on the one hand the medical profession, and particularly those members of it who are engaged in original research, have emphatically insisted upon the absolute necessity of experiments upon living animals if they are efficiently to perform their work of curing diseases and alleviating human suffering; on the other hand a body of people, calling themselves Anti-vivisectionists, have banded themselves together in various societies in order to oppose all experiments upon living animals, and their opposition has been consistent, persistent, and unwavering.

Outside these two camps the great body of the general public stands, not exactly indifferent, but rather in a state of suspended judgement. The difficulties which surround the problem make this position understandable, but it is unfortunate that it exists; for the general public, and not the minorities we have mentioned,

is the deciding factor as to whether these experiments are to be continued or not, and, if they are, under what conditions they shall be performed. The aim of this chapter is to place before the general reader the case as it stands at present, and to ask him to form an opinion upon it.

The point at issue between the two contending parties seems to be fairly clear. The supporter of vivisection affirms that experiments must be performed upon animals if we are to understand the functions of the human body and study the diseases which cause so much distress and suffering to mankind. The only alternative is to experiment upon man himself, and this course, the vivisectionist contends, is unthinkable when we compare the value of human with animal life. Even if, in some cases, these experiments upon animals cause unavoidable pain they are still justified, since it would be morally wrong to sacrifice the well-being of man to the well-being of animals. Sir Charles Ballance, writing in *The Times* while Sir F. Banbury's Bill was under discussion, puts the case for experiments as follows: "The moral question involved is not whether experiments on animals are justifiable, but whether it is right to perform operations on man without being first satisfied of their feasibility, and endeavouring to perfect them by performing experiments on animals. Every advance in surgery must be at first of the nature of experiment, and the only question is whether the experiment should be made on man or brutes."

The position of the anti-vivisectionist is equally clear. He maintains that it is never right to inflict suffering upon animals for the purposes of acquiring or communicating medical knowledge or surgical skill, no matter what good may result therefrom to human beings; that there is something morally degrading in using animals for experiments, and that the evil effect produced upon the person who performs the experiment, and upon the community which tolerates their being performed, far outweighs any advantage that can be obtained from them; and, moreover, the majority of anti-vivisectionists dispute the claim that man has really benefited by these experiments upon animals. The two opinions, it will be seen, are diametrically opposed, there is no *via media*. Which of them is the right one?

It may, perhaps, clear the ground if we recognize at the outset that the root of the problem is essentially in the moral sphere, and indeed upon this both parties are agreed. Consequently we should expect that the appeal would be made primarily to the reason and not to sentimentality. Any one, however, who read Sir F. Banbury's speech, by which his measure obtained a second reading in the House, will have seen that quite half of it is not an appeal to reason at all, but to sentiment. "The dog is the friend of man, *ergo* . . ." is the burden of it. And this is typical of the whole anti-vivisection propaganda. But we have to deal with principles, not with sentiments. The question we have to ask is:

Has man the moral right to perform experiments upon animals, which may cause them pain, in order to find a means of lessening human suffering? That I love animals ought not to prevent me from consenting to their being employed for man's good, if it is morally right that they should be so used. That this is the real issue will, I think, be accepted by the average reader to whom this chapter is addressed.

Every right-thinking man or woman has a certain "moral sense" respecting the brute creation. We condemn, without any hesitation, the infliction of needless pain upon animals; we are revolted by wanton cruelty and torture done with the object of gratifying a lust for cruelty, and we pronounce such to be grossly immoral. But it is equally true to say that the generality of people condemn the opposite extreme which is sometimes presented to us. When we see the extravagant affection which is lavished upon some pet animal, and the time and care which is devoted to its comfort, often at the expense of really important domestic obligations, we feel that we are rightly disgusted by such conduct. We cannot bear to think of some little Pekinese spaniel well fed, surrounded with every luxury, and slavishly adored by his mistress, while a few yards away little children are neglected and starving; neither can we bear to think of that same little Pekinese being wantonly tortured by some wretched boy who delights in cruelty for cruelty's sake.

It is here, I think, that we come to close

grips with our problem ; if we are to be convinced that experiments upon animals may be allowed we must first of all satisfy ourselves that it is morally right for such experiments to be performed ; if this is established, we have next to consider whether the positive results obtained justify the experiments ; and, finally, we must feel satisfied that no more pain is inflicted upon the animal than is absolutely necessary and unavoidable. Let us, then, shape our inquiry upon these lines.

The question of the moral right to perform experiments upon animals for man's good can only be answered by considering the relative position of man to the rest of the animal kingdom. Catholic moralists have done this by distinguishing between the rights of man and the so-called rights of animals. They point out that "rights," as such, can only belong to persons as distinguished from things. We may define a right as the moral power by virtue of which a person may have and enjoy that to which he has a natural claim. Thus, I have a right to my life, my freedom, and my honour. Rights, moreover, connote duties, and when a man has a right his fellow men have a duty to leave him free to have and to enjoy that right. Man is a being who is possessed of reason and self-control ; he is therefore an end in himself, and consequently may not be treated as a mere means to the end of others.

But this is not so with animals, they have neither reason nor self-control, and may not be designated as persons; it thus follows that, since persons only can have rights and duties, animals have no rights, nor have we any duties *towards them*, although, as we shall see shortly, we have duties *respecting them*. How any Christian, or any Jew for the matter of that, can dispute this it is difficult to see. In our every day life we assume that the brute creation do not exist for themselves, but in order that they may be used by man.

Some anti-vivisectionists who profess the Christian religion contend that animals were not made for our use but for God's glory, and quote in support of their contention the words "for Thy pleasure they are and were created"; but this is to state only half the truth. We must also take into account Genesis i. 28, "And God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Whatever may be our view of the literal value of the Creation story, every one who believes in the inspiration of Holy Scripture will admit that these words reflect the divine will on the question. We recognize this in our ordinary use of animals. The sheep is shorn to provide blankets for our warmth in winter, and no doubt feels the cold in consequence. Our feet are shod with the tanned

hide of the ox, and his flesh supplies us with the energy to write for or against vivisection. It is only going a step further to contend that if animals may be used as a means of sustaining life, they may also be used as a means of alleviating human suffering.

But while agreeing with and maintaining this position as sound we cannot lose sight of the fact that we have duties respecting animals. And these are the same as those respecting all other creatures God has entrusted to us; we must use and not abuse them. This is why we feel a moral indignation when animals are wantonly tortured or pained simply for the sake of cruelty; the act is immoral because it is a violation of the duty we have respecting animals, and a misuse of God's creatures. But this is obviously very different from a skilled and qualified surgeon making experiments upon animals, and under conditions which aim at causing a minimum amount of pain to the animal and for the purpose of benefiting the human race. In this case it is maintained, on the grounds stated above, that a right and proper use is being made of God's creatures.

We have now arrived at the conclusion that there is nothing morally wrong in experimenting upon animals with the object of discovering means to conquer diseases and lessen human suffering; our next task is to establish that these good results have been obtained by vivisection.

And here we are met by the difficulty that the non-scientific reader has to rely upon the opinion of the specialist (who is alleged by the opponents of vivisection to be a biassed witness) regarding the relative importance of the results which have been obtained. But, as a matter of fact, we have constantly to rely upon the opinion of specialists in forming our opinions about all kinds of questions besides that of vivisection, and when we find a general agreement amongst the specialists we accept the conclusion as authoritative.

Such a general agreement is to be found in the present case ; to-day there is not one surgeon of any eminence who denies the utility of experiments upon animals ; it is true that there are a few general practitioners who are members of anti-vivisection societies, but it is safe to say that they are not persons who are interested in original research, and are often unable to understand the aims of the original investigator. The lists of eminent people who have condemned experiments, produced by anti-vivisection societies, are conspicuous by the absence of the names of men eminent in science and medicine. We naturally ask, Who are the best judges as to the value of these experiments? Poets such as Shakespeare, actors such as Sir Henry Irving, or specialists such as Lord Lister, or, in our own day, Sir Charles Ballance, who is constantly coming into close contact with suffering humanity, and using his brain and skill to combat such suffering ? Common sense supplies

the answer. When the anti-vivisectionists can produce a formidable list of eminent medical men who tell us that vivisection is useless and unprofitable we shall be prepared to listen to them.[1]

Almost every branch of medicine and surgery has benefited either directly or indirectly by knowledge gained from experiments upon animals; and it would be quite impossible to give here anything like a complete survey of the evidence.[2] Since, in the selection I make, I have naturally chosen those cases which I understand best, it may not be out of place for me to state that for ten years before ordination I was engaged in scientific work, but that my field of inquiry lay primarily in pure chemistry, and only incidentally in zoology and bacteriology. That is to say, I have never myself performed experiments upon living animals, although I have seen such operations conducted, and have some little knowledge of their value to humanity.

[1] The reader will, I hope, recognize clearly that the evidence of medical experts is quoted only with reference to the good results obtained by vivisection. Whether it is morally right to perform experiments upon animals is a separate question, which is for the moralist, not the doctor, to decide.

[2] Mr. W. G. Spencer, F.R.C.S., Lecturer in Surgery at the Westminster Hospital, has very kindly lent me the manuscript of an address he gave at Edinburgh on "The Historical Relationship between Experiments on Animals and the Development of Surgery"; it will shortly be published by the University of London Press, and the non-medical reader will find it pleasingly free from abstruse technical terms. Several of the cases I give are taken from Mr. Spencer's notes.

The first recorded experiments made upon animals with the object of obtaining knowledge for surgical operations are those performed and described by Galen (A.D. 130–200); it is only comparatively recently that the importance of his work has obtained full recognition, and after eighteen hundred years he is still influencing surgery through the vivisection experiments he then performed. The epoch-making discovery in medicine of the early seventeenth century was William Harvey's demonstration of the circulation of the blood; and, as Harvey himself said, it was only possible to do the work by experimenting upon living animals; the cadaver is useless for the purpose, the mechanism of circulation can only be studied in the living body.

One of the major operations in modern surgery is the excision of the spleen, which may be necessitated through wounding—as in war—or through rupture as the result of a fall or blow, or through disease; this operation has only been made possible by experimenting upon animals. A series of experiments were carried on in 1872 on dogs; and it was not only proved that the spleen could safely be removed, but also it was discovered that temporary disturbances occur after the operation until the function of the spleen has been taken over by organs allied to it. In 1896 Bernard Pitts and Sir Charles Ballance operated upon three patients suffering from rupture of the spleen following on accident.

All three patients recovered, but during convalescence they developed the temporary disturbances which had been observed in the dogs; the surgeons were thus able to anticipate these disturbances and provide for them, so that in the end the patients made a good recovery. I have myself observed a case of removal of the spleen which was quite successful.

Another series of experiments upon dogs—the removal of the kidney—has done much to save human life. It was established that a dog could live without any inconvenience after one kidney had been removed, and that the remaining organ enlarged and performed the work of two. These experiments led to the operation being performed on a woman in 1870; she made a good recovery, and was alive seven years later. This was the beginning of that branch of surgery in which the only thing to do, in order to save life, is to remove the diseased or injured kidney.

Operations involving the opening of the abdomen are now of daily occurrence, and no one looks upon them as extraordinary; but not so very long ago it was almost always fatal to open the abdomen. Space will not allow of our considering this important branch of surgery in any detail; it is most difficult to describe briefly, and the reader must be referred to Mr. Spencer's lecture; he will see there how great is the debt owed to experiments upon living animals. It is now possible to operate safely for such dangerous diseases as

gastric ulcer, abdominal and deep-seated cancer, and appendicitis. No doubt some of my readers have reason themselves to be thankful that experiments were performed upon animals in order that this advance could be made.

Just as striking is the progress to be noticed in the surgery of the brain, and this again is the direct result of experiments upon animals ; it is also interesting to know that, in spite of anti-vivisection opposition, most of the pioneer work has been done in this country ; the name of Sir Victor Horsley stands out conspicuous as one of the great leaders in cranial surgery.

Our present inquiry would not be complete without some passing reference to the part played in experiments upon animals in combating those diseases which are due to bacteria and micro-organisms. The field of inquiry is so extensive that we cannot do more than select two or three outstanding examples for illustration. Tetanus (lock-jaw) is caused by a bacillus, and is a highly dangerous disease. In the old days, before its origin was understood, it was treated by surgical operation, a method which was quite useless. In 1884 it was discovered that true tetanus, as contrasted with various conditions which had hitherto been confused with it, could be inoculated into rabbits. The investigation was carried further, and finally it was established that highly-manured soil and road earth are the habitat of the tetanus bacillus, and that the serum of the blood of a horse

infected by tetanus contains an anti-tetanic toxin. These discoveries were destined to produce important results during the war, and to be the means of saving thousands of lives. At the beginning of the war (1914) neither the Allies nor the Germans anticipated the great number of deaths from tetanus which began to occur when the armies were fighting in the highly-farmed districts of Northern France. As soon as the danger was realized the doctors began to treat the wounded, directly they were brought into the dressing stations, with injections of anti-tetanic serum ; the result was that the disease did not develop, and deaths from tetanus became few in number.

Diphtheria is a disease which, unfortunately, is all too familiar ; like tetanus it is due to a specific bacillus, and, before this was properly recognized, it was also treated by surgical operation. The doctors tried to save the life of the sufferer by performing tracheotomy, and Mr. Spencer tells us that "in my student days I do not think more than one in ten of the children survived." "The special bacillus causing diphtheria," he continues, "was distinguished in 1882 by inoculating the disease from the throats of patients to the respiratory mucous membrane of birds and animals, where there occurred a formation of membrane like that on the fauces of children. Following upon this horses were inoculated, and the anti-diphtheritic serum we now use was got from the horse's blood. This serum is a

perpetual protection against what is an everyday danger ; if treated by the serum at once the child is safe, and there is no occasion for tracheotomy.

The good effect of serum treatment, as contrasted with the older surgical methods, is also well illustrated in the case of anthrax. Mr. Spencer describes it as follows : " Surgeons treated it (anthrax) as a malignant kind of carbuncle, and cut or burnt it out. This leaves a painful slowly-healing wound, and ends in an ugly scar. But this treatment is wrong, because cases vary so much in severity; in some all cutting and burning is quite unnecessary, in others of a virulent kind it does no good whatever, the patient dies in a day or two. Now, if cases are treated at once by injecting the proper serum, there is no need for any surgical treatment. In the Argentine, in 1917, 146 cases of anthrax of the skin were treated by a specially efficient kind of serum, and there was only one death, and that because the treatment was started too late."

One of the most distressing and horrible diseases from which man can suffer is that of hydrophobia ; a disease, moreover, which has once more come into prominence owing to the outbreak of rabies in this country. Sir Charles Ballance, writing in *The Times*, speaks of it as follows : " If any one of the opponents of experiments on dogs had witnessed, as we have, a case of hydrophobia in man, they would not be now voting against experiments on dogs, but would be voting for the destruction of all the dogs in

the land." It was the genius of Pasteur, a devout Catholic and a skilled vivisectionist, which discovered a reliable cure for this truly terrible disease. The Pasteur lymph was originally found by vivisection ; it is the only known remedy for hydrophobia, and it can only be produced by vivisection. When a person is bitten by a mad dog the wound is infected by a certain bacillus ; this bacillus remains in the wound and develops there a specific poison. For the poison to take effect, however, it is necessary that it should reach the spinal cord of the person infected ; this takes time, and here comes in the value of the Pasteur lymph. The lymph, which is injected into the system, contains the same poison, in an attenuated form, as that produced by the infecting bacillus, and by gradually increasing the doses of the lymph the system becomes "tolerant" of the wound-poison, so that when the latter reaches the spinal cord it can do no harm, and the patient's life is saved. Now this life-saving lymph is made from the spinal cords of rabbits, and can be obtained by one means alone, that of the vivisection of rabbits.

We can now put a test question to the anti-vivisectionist. In the event of his little daughter being bitten by a mad dog, would he refuse to allow the Pasteur lymph to be employed ? And if he did refuse, would not common sense condemn his action as a violation of his parental duties ? For, remember, there is no other known remedy for hydrophobia, and in at least sixteen

per cent. of untreated cases the result is fatal. In our test case the consistent anti-vivisectionist, in order to spare a few rabbits a little pain, is willing to sacrifice the life of his own child, a life that has been given to him as a sacred trust from God.

This illustration of the treatment of hydrophobia, I venture to think, shows more clearly than any other the essentially immoral principle which lies at the bottom of the anti-vivisectionist objections. A purely gratuitous assumption is made that animals have "rights" which are equal, if not superior, to the rights of humanity. Such an assumption is repudiated by common sense, and is directly opposed to the truths of revealed religion.

The illustrations given will, I think, satisfy the fair-minded reader that experiments upon animals have contributed in a very great degree to the saving of human life and the alleviation of suffering. The general public has thus a direct interest in the proposals that are being brought forward by the anti-vivisectionists to abolish experiments upon dogs and other animals; it is a matter of such importance to humanity at large that we ought to have our minds made up on it, and be prepared to act according to our convictions. We have only, so far, considered those cases in which experiments have been brought to a definite conclusion; but we have to remember that investigations are still in progress, and that these would be stopped at once if the Bill passed

into law, and mankind would be the loser in consequence.

One example of this kind of research must suffice. Dr. Thomas Lewis, F.R.S., in a letter to *The Times*, protesting against the reintroduction of the "Dogs Protection Bill," states the case clearly as follows: "I have said that the condition now called fibrillation of the auricles, to take one of numerous examples, was recognized to occur in man as a result of experiments on six London mongrels. Occurring in man, fibrillation is a very grave disorder; it is present in from sixty to seventy per cent. of all those patients who are admitted to our great London hospitals suffering from cardiac failure, and in these patients it is the chief cause of failure. The importance of thoroughly understanding this common and serious malady cannot be overrated. The first and main step in this investigation was taken when the disorder was recognized in man; the manner of this recognition I have stated. The second and naturally essential step is to discover what fibrillation of the auricles actually is. That cannot be done by observation upon patients; it can only be done by observing the condition in the exposed heart of an animal in which an identical condition is produced.

Thanks to the defeat of Sir F. Banbury's Bill last year, this work has for twelve months been in progress, and the second step is all but complete; we are within sight of our goal, and when it is reached, as it will be reached within a few

months, providing this Bill does not become law, it will have been reached solely through further experiments on London mongrels. As a result of this twelve months' work, we have been able to obtain a far deeper insight into the condition ; we begin at last clearly to see the causes which are at work in producing it in man. Here, then, is an example of research, depending upon painless experiments on dogs, which has reached a stage full of promise. It is a research which, if it is allowed to proceed, will shortly enlighten us in regard to one of the commonest of grave human maladies. The research ends the moment the present Bill becomes law. Will the work, which I have outlined, proceed on other animals? It will not ; for the whole of the essential preliminary work, which has taken no less than nine years to accomplish, has been planned and carried through with the constant intention of completing the researches upon the dog, the most suitable animal for the purpose at our disposal."

We have now reached the last stage in our inquiry into the vivisection problem ; it only remains for us to satisfy ourselves that the experiments made upon living animals are conducted in such a manner that no more pain is caused than is absolutely necessary and unavoidable. I do not propose to discuss the question of the degree and intensity of pain felt by animals as compared with ourselves, it must necessarily be a matter of conjecture ; we know that they do

feel pain, but careful observation leads us to conclude that they neither anticipate the coming of pain, nor remember its intensity afterwards, and it is this which makes pain so much dreaded by human adults. Perhaps their sufferings are somewhat analogous to those of children ; we do not remember the many pains we felt during our childhood days, and consequently we feel none the worse for having endured them ; it may be also that animals, like children, at once indicate by outward signs the presence of the slightest pain where an adult would exercise suppression.

But a word must be said about the charges of wanton cruelty which are constantly brought forward by anti-vivisectionists against those scientists who conduct experiments upon living animals. As already stated, I have seen such experiments conducted, and number amongst my acquaintances, if not amongst my more intimate friends, some of those who are engaged in original research involving vivisection. I can only conclude, from what I have myself seen, that those who make this grave and serious charge of wanton cruelty do so either because they are directly prejudiced against surgeons as such, or because they fail entirely to appreciate the conditions under which the experiments have to be performed.

That a prejudice or "phobia" against a particular class or profession may exist can cause us no surprise for we have so many examples of it. Take, for instance, the "sacerdotal

phobia." The word "priest" to certain people is synonymous with all that is evil and dishonest; priests are just wicked scheming creatures, parasites upon society who preach a religion in which they do not themselves believe in order to live in ease and idleness. Some people seriously believe all this, and no amount of reasoning will convince them to the contrary; and the same seems to be true of certain people with regard to surgeons as a class. Honesty compels us to admit that there are priests who have betrayed their sacred trust, and who answer to the description given, but we repudiate most strongly and indignantly the assumption that the charge is true of the whole profession.

In exactly the same way there may be isolated instances of surgeons who are depraved and cruel; such exist in every profession and grade of society, but to say that this is true of the whole is a base and wicked calumny upon an honourable profession, and can only be accounted for on the assumption that an inveterate prejudice exists in the mind of the person who makes the charge. Moreover, wantonly to torture the animal upon which the experiment is being made would be the surest means of defeating the object with which the operation is performed; this statement will be made clear by the description given below of a typical "cutting" experiment. The man who wishes to be cruel to animals does not need a public

laboratory, open to State inspection, for his evil purpose ; he would rather slink away into some secluded corner to satisfy his unnatural craving —evil never seeks publicity.

Let us now consider the conditions under which so-called "cutting" experiments upon animals have to be performed ; that these conditions are not fully understood is, I feel sure, a fruitful source of objection to them. As the regulations stand no one can conduct these operations unless he is properly qualified to do so, and his qualification is acknowledged by the granting of a licence ; moreover, the experiments have to be performed in a laboratory which is open at any time for inspection by State officials. All animals experimented upon have to be completely under the influence of an anaesthetic for the whole period of the operation, and they must be killed before regaining consciousness. But in those cases where the nature of the experiment makes it necessary for the animal to be allowed to survive, it must be watched, and should pain supervene at any time it must at once be killed by a suitable anaesthetic. Under conditions such as these the animal suffers little, sometimes no pain—certainly not so much as many of those animals which are slaughtered for food ; if the latter is considered to be morally permissible it is hard to understand on what grounds objection may be taken to the former.

It may not be out of place to describe what happens during a typical experiment, the reader

can then judge for himself whether the conditions are humane or not.[1] Since dogs are the animals particularly suitable for experiments in relation to surgery, we will take them as our illustration. It should be clearly understood that any research, having for its object the advance of surgery, must follow a method which imitates as closely as possible an operation upon a human being; any departure from such a course would introduce complications which would destroy the aim and value of the experiment. The dogs used for experiments are those stray, ownerless animals which prowl about the streets half starved until some kindly-disposed person takes or sends them to the lethal chamber. Before the experiment can be performed it is necessary that the animal should be in the best possible condition.

What happens first of all is that the stray, half-starved dog, instead of being destroyed, is placed under the best veterinary conditions; when it is found that he is free from organic disease and parasitic affections of the skin, he is comfortably housed and fed until he is strong and well. The operation is performed under exactly the same conditions, and with the same care, as if the patient were a child instead of a dog. The animal's meals are so arranged that the time of the operation coincides with a meal-time; its stomach will then

[1] I am indebted to Sir Charles Ballance for informing me regarding the latest methods employed in the laboratory in conducting experiments upon animals.

be empty, it will not have suffered from hunger, and any disadvantage arising from the taking of the anaesthetic will be reduced to a minimum.

The anaesthetic is administered in exactly the same way as in the case of the human subject, and when the animal is completely anaesthetized the operation is performed. The method of doing this of course varies with the nature of the experiment, but in all cases the same elaborate precautions are taken against septic infection as in the case of human beings, i.e. the skin is thoroughly disinfected, the surgeon wears sterilized rubber gloves, all instruments used are previously disinfected. After the operation is completed the animal is either killed by a further administration of the anaesthetic and without regaining consciousness, or, if the nature of the experiment necessitates further observation, its recovery is attended to in the manner to be described.

Just as it is essential that the operation should be performed with the greatest care, if it is to be of any value, so also it is necessary that every attention should be given to the animal while it is recovering from the effects of the operation. As a matter of fact it is nursed back to health as carefully as if it were a child. In most cases the animal will require an injection of morphia to give it sleep after the passing off of the general anaesthetic, and it has to be made as warm and comfortable as possible. Then, when it wakes up, it is supplied with suitable

nourishment and attention; and as the effects of the operation pass off its diet is carefully regulated, small amounts of lightly-cooked food are given at proper intervals, until it finally recovers its health. It is then painlessly killed by an overdose of chloroform, so that the region experimented upon may be re-examined and a knowledge of the results of the operation obtained.

It is thus experiments upon animals are conducted, and it is by this means that valuable information is obtained to save human life and to lessen suffering. And, it may be pointed out in conclusion, many of these experiments have not only formed a sound basis for the relief of human suffering, but have also been the means of saving animals themselves from pain and death.

CHAPTER IX

Keeping Lent

Keeping Lent a "problem" for every earnest Christian—Failure to realize the opportunities afforded by Lent a common experience—The prominence given to fasting belongs to the natural, not the spiritual man—William James on asceticism—Self-denial for its own sake both irrational and immoral—Rightly regulated desire as essential element in the development of personality—That is why prayer is of first importance in the Lenten rule—Personality has to be met with personality—Prayer gives us the vision of Christ—The disciplinary value of almsgiving.

HOW to keep Lent properly is a "problem" which every earnest Catholic, be he a priest or layman, faces seriously and thoughtfully as that holy season comes round year by year. We are all of us conscious of the great spiritual possibilities which lie in store for us, if we only avail ourselves of the opportunities offered; we are all equally conscious, alas, of our past failure to respond to these opportunities. How to use the present opportunity aright, so that the spiritual possibilities contained therein may be realized, is the problem of keeping Lent.

Here is the personal experience of a lady who writes for advice at the beginning of Lent. "As

Lent will be here again soon," she says, "will you please give me some advice on how to keep it? I really did try last year to observe a good Lent. I gave up everything I could think of, and although I was tempted to relax my rule I stuck to it all through. And yet by the end of the Easter octave I seemed to have lost all I thought I had gained; as far as I can judge from the results, I might as well have never tried to keep Lent at all." The experience given here is by no means unique; it has been shared, I have not the smallest doubt, by many, if not by the majority, of those who read this chapter. Let us, then, examine it together, and using it as the basis of our inquiry, make an attempt to discover what are the general principles upon which we ought to found our Lenten observance, so that it may produce in us the permanent spiritual results we desire.

Two things at once strike us on reading the letter. The first is the prominence accorded to "the giving up of everything"; the second is the willingness—nay, the eagerness—to commence all over again, despite the frank acknowledgement that failure and not success has been the result of previous experiences. These facts provide us with some material for thought. Our manuals of devotion and treatises on asceticism, when offering advice on the Lenten discipline, usually recommend that the rule should be drawn up under three main headings, and in the following order: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving. This

order is significant, and displays a real psychological and spiritual insight; but it is not the order which the "natural man" would choose, he would give fasting the first place. And the reason, I think, is plain. From the very fact that man is a rational creature he recognizes that there is within himself a conflict of desires: the lower self is ever striving against the higher self, the rational against the non-rational impulses. These lower desires and impulses must be subjugated, reason tells us, if we are to realize the true, the higher self; and repression seems at first sight to be the most effective means of bringing about the desired end. The body must be buffeted in order to bring it into bondage. So our correspondent is following a *natural* inclination when she tells us that she is once more willing to "give up everything she can think of." Asceticism is not distinctively Christian, it belongs to man as a rational creature.

Professor William James tells us, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, of an agnostic who was in the habit of getting out of bed, no matter what time of night it might be, and standing for a few minutes in the cold whenever he found himself delighting in the cosy warmth of his bed. He did it, he said, in order to prove his manhood. Then there is the well-known instance of that rugged old Scotch philosopher Thomas Carlyle, who, while residing in Berlin during a terribly rigorous winter, set his teeth firmly every morning and plunged into the freezing waters of his

bath. He was not going to be beaten, spirit is superior to matter, soul to body, and he would prove it by his actions.

Professor James himself realizes the value of asceticism, and the advice he gives in the chapter on Habit in his *Principles of Psychology* is almost a classic. "Keep the faculty of effort alive in you," he says, "by a little gratuitous exercise every day. That is, be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points, do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it, so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test. Asceticism of this sort is like the insurance which a man pays on his house and goods. The tax does him no good at the time, and possibly may never bring him a return. But if the fire *does* come, his having paid it will be his salvation from ruin. So with the man who has daily inured himself to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition, and self-denial in unnecessary things. He will stand like a tower when everything rocks around him, and when his softer fellow mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast."

This is sound advice as far as it goes, but unfortunately it does not go far enough ; and it is because of the insufficiency of asceticism by itself that failure is so often the result of practising it. May not our correspondent, and perhaps some of our readers, have made this initial

error in the past? We must never practise asceticism just for the sake of doing it; such a course of action is not only irrational, it is immoral. The only thing which can give any real value to self-denial is the object with which it is performed. Asceticism should never be made an end in itself, it is only a means to an end, and unless this truth is always kept well to the front ascetic practices are bound to end in failure. S. Jerome was an ascetic of the ascetics; we may admire his truly terrible austerities, but we should never have the courage or strength to imitate them. And these are the wise words which flow from his pen: "Be on your guard when you begin to mortify your body by abstinence and fasting, lest you imagine yourself to be perfect and a saint; for perfection does not consist in this virtue. It is only a help, a disposition, a means, though a fitting one, for the attainment of true perfection." Yes, asceticism has its dangers as well as its uses, its disadvantages as well as its advantages, and this is all too often forgotten.

Besides the dangers already indicated there is one more we may note; it is a psychological fact that the self-conscious effort to crush certain tendencies and desires often produces exactly the opposite result from that wished for; it only serves to concentrate the mind upon them, and to make the last state of the man worse than the first. Self-discipline can never be a good thing if it is undertaken simply and solely for its own

sake ; it must have some supernatural motive at the back of it.

That is why our manuals of devotion are right in placing prayer before fasting. Brother Ass is an obstinate beast, he sets his feet firmly into the ground and refuses to budge. Naturally we begin to beat him, he deserves it, but still he refuses to budge, being more determined than before. Something else must be done ; persuasion must be tried. And this brings us to what, I think, is another very important consideration in keeping Lent. Prayer does something which can never be effected by asceticism : it consecrates and transforms those very desires and impulses which cause us all our trouble, and it does this by directing the whole man, with his complex of emotions good and bad, towards Christ Himself.

The mediaeval Schoolmen, so often despised by our modern philosophers, hit upon a profound psychological truth when they proclaimed that rightly regulated desire is an essential element in the development of the ideal character. It was a truth dimly recognized by Aristotle, but missed by Plato, ignored by the Stoics, and hidden from the keen perception of Kant. Still it is of the very essence of the spiritual life. We need to recognize that for the true development of personality our impulses must be directed towards and co-ordinated with our ideal ; every man has within him the latent possibility of becoming either a saint or a devil ; what he will

become depends upon the direction he gives to that complex of emotions and desires which we call his nature. It is the direction of our impulses which ultimately determine what our personality shall become.

And this is where prayer comes in ; why it is of first importance in the Lenten rule. True prayer leads us to Christ Himself ; it is the means by which our personality is brought into living contact with His Personality. And—I would strongly emphasize this—it is only by contact with Him that our emotions and desires can be transformed and consecrated ; by a knowledge of His Personality our weakness can be turned into strength, and those very tendencies which cause us so much shame and distress may be made our surest stepping-stones to the throne of God.

Then there must be active co-operation with our ideal. Human personality always needs another personality external to itself, to which to look for its inspiration. This fundamental fact is, I feel sure, all too often obscured, or even lost sight of. There is a tendency in dealing with souls that are broken down by sin to appeal to some indefinite conception such as their manhood, or the ideal of virtue and goodness. But no mere subjective or impersonal ideal will suffice ; personality has to be met with personality.

Fr. Maturin has well illustrated this in the following words : "How can an abstract, cold standard have a chance against living types

of character? How can Moses with his Law written on two tables of stone, even though they be written by the finger of God, stand against Aaron and the daughters of Israel dancing round the golden calf? No wonder that he threw them from him in despair and broke them to atoms. The cold, chaste standards of a rigid orthodoxy, whether in doctrine or manners, has a poor chance in the presence of the warm, palpitating life of human beings who to all appearance get on so well without them. . . . We need more than this, we need the living Presence of Him of whom the Gospels speak, alive and close to us to-day, to whom we can turn in the hour of need, whose influence we can feel more potent than that of any one on earth. And this is given us in the Person of our Lord, the centre, the life, the mainspring of the Christian Faith."

It is here we find the psychological basis of love, and he who would develop his personality to the full cannot rest contented with any but the highest personality that has been revealed to us, that of Jesus Christ Himself. Take a lower personality than this as the object of your love, and your struggle for self-development and self-expression is bound to end in failure; but if your earthly affections and aspirations are sanctified by your love for Jesus your whole life is raised to a different level.

Now a moment's thought will show that fasting, by itself, as S. Jerome reminds us, can never

bring about this end or effect this transformation of personality. Asceticism is good and necessary, for it is the outward discipline of the self, but prayer must be there first to take it by the hand and lead it. For prayer is the inner discipline of the soul, where our personality meets and learns to know the only Personality which can give a right direction to and elevate our nature—Jesus Christ Himself.

And one final word concerning the third heading given in our manuals of devotion—Almsgiving. The meaning of this must also be extended. If Lent is to be kept properly, almsgiving must mean something more than additional donations in money, it involves a recognition that love and charity are essential elements in the Christian idea of discipline. Prayer reveals to us the vision of the love of God, and almsgiving (using the word in its widest sense) must be the practical realization of this vision. It is the fact that God is Love which gives its wonderful significance to our Lord's command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." To the Jew, "neighbour" meant one of the chosen people, and to him justice only was necessary; an eye was demanded for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Not so with the Christian; once he realizes the loving Fatherhood of God all is changed; his "neighbour" is not only the true believer, but also the sinner, the outcast, the schismatic, the unbeliever. This wide charity towards all mankind is one of the distinctive characteristics of

Christian faith and discipline. Well may we during the Lenten season beat our breasts and say *mea culpa* when we reflect upon our lack of charity in the past ; but the reflection should stimulate within us a deeper desire to exercise, however imperfectly, the real discipline that the Christian law of love demands.

So our inquiry leads us to conclude that if our Lenten rule is to be effective it must be complete. It will be dominated all through by the discipline of prayer, which brings to the soul the vision of the Person of Christ ; the discipline of fasting will be an important instrument in opening the eyes of the soul to this vision ; and the discipline of charity will help the soul to mould itself into the re-presentation of the vision it has received.

CHAPTER X

Problems regarding Holy Communion

Introduction—The problem of frequent Communion—The internal conflict—Historical considerations—The early Fathers—The decrease in frequency of reception—The condition in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—The influence of the Jesuits and the Jansenists—S. Thomas Aquinas—S. Francis of Sales—The Decree of Pius X on Daily Communion—Another way of approaching the problem—The Eucharist and the Atonement—Theories of the Atonement—The link with the Eucharist—Conclusion—The problem of the fast before Communion—Valid conditions for non-fasting reception—Recent Papal Decrees—How far can we avail ourselves of them ?—The case of those who are unable to fast—The case of those who think they are unable to fast—The "fixed idea"—Suggested remedies.

WHEN the articles upon which this present volume is based were appearing in the *Church Times* the writer received a large number of letters from correspondents asking him to deal with many and various problems. He was rather surprised to find that the majority of these letters referred to difficulties relating to the frequency of reception of the Blessed Sacrament and the discipline of fasting Communion. This shows that these questions are of immediate and pressing interest

to many Churchmen, and that a discussion of them will not be out of place in this volume. An attempt will be made, in what follows, to deal with the difficulties revealed by the correspondence, and, if possible, to give some practical help towards their solution. In both cases, however, the subject can only be dealt with in broad outline and by indicating the general principles involved, since individual needs must necessarily be considered with reference to the special circumstances surrounding them.

I

Frequent Communion

It need not be wondered at, after all, that the devout communicant should experience some perplexity regarding the frequency of his Communion ; to him his religion is a very serious matter, and because it is so serious he weighs well the consequences of his actions, not only from the negative side of avoiding sin, but also from the positive side of advancing in virtue. He hears the gracious invitation of the Master to the weary soul, bidding it come to Him for refreshment, and he longs to respond again and again to that loving call. But he hears also S. Paul's words of solemn warning against those who shall receive this divine gift with presumption and unworthily ; and his very reverence for the Blessed Sacrament and the recognition of his own imperfections make him hesitate to take

that for which his soul longs. So the presence of this internal conflict is to be looked for rather amongst those who are striving after perfection than amongst those who are contented to take a less serious view of their religious responsibilities. This fact may well be kept in mind both by confessors and penitents ; it helps, in no small degree, in arriving at a true solution of the difficulty. It is also natural that he who experiences this difficulty should wish to submit the solution of it to some judgement other than his own ; it is always hard—often impossible—to arrive at a proper estimate of one's own spiritual condition ; we need a wise, impartial, and detached external mind to put us under review, and to tell us just where we stand.

The problem of frequent Communion is no new one, and some notice must be taken of the historical side of the question if we are to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. No attempt can be made here to give the subject the complete treatment it deserves ; a bare outline-sketch of the changes which have taken place from time to time in Church opinion and practice is all that can be offered ; the references to the work of original investigators may help those who wish to pursue this most interesting part of Church history further.

The Apostolic Church in Jerusalem met daily for the "breaking of bread,"[1] but this practice does not appear to have been observed in

[1] Acts ii. 46.

other local Churches ; the general custom was for the Holy Eucharist to be offered every Sunday. It is in Tertullian, I think, that we have the earliest evidence that Mass was celebrated on other days than Sunday.[1] S. Justin Martyr tells us that the Christians of his day came together for worship on the Sunday ; later on S. Cyprian (third century) says that he and his brother priests offered the Sacrifice to God daily. It was the custom for the faithful to receive Communion every time they were present at Mass, and in consequence frequency of reception depended only upon the frequency with which the Liturgy was celebrated.[2] So weekly Communion, on Sunday, would no doubt be the rule for all, and in addition there existed the, to us moderns, curious custom of providing the faithful with the consecrated Species of Bread so that they might receive It in their homes.[3]

The conversion of the Emperor Constantine to the Faith was not an unmixed blessing ; Christianity became fashionable, and in consequence there was a vast body of "believers" added to the Church whose religion was merely nominal. This had its effect upon the practice of frequent

[1] *De Orat.*, c. xix ; *De Corona*, c. iii.

[2] See Duchesne, *Christian Worship* ; Funk, *Manual of Church History* (Kegan Paul. Two vols. 1910).

[3] See also Hamilton's *People of God* (1912) for an interesting account of the work of the presbyters in the Apostolic Church, Vol. II, p. 88 et seq. ; Batiffol's *Etudes d'Historie et de Theologie Positive* (1907) ; and Warren's *Liturgy and Ritual of the Ante-Nicene Church* (1897).

Communion, as is only to be expected, and the custom soon ceased to be general. S. Augustine, however, discusses with a correspondent the practice of daily Communion and gives advice regarding it.[1] It was after Communion at every Mass ceased to be the general rule that the distribution of the Eulogies was introduced as a kind of substitute for it. Bread was blessed at the oblation, and afterwards distributed to the non-communicants ; the custom still survives in France under the name of the *pain bénit*, and amongst the Greeks.

An interesting change took place after the seventh century, when it became increasingly common for the clergy to say each one his own Mass daily. In fact many priests seem to have said Mass several times a day, and Funk quotes a decree of the Council of Seligenstadt (1022) which forbids more than *three* Masses to be said on the same day. What immediately concerns us is that with this increase in Masses there was a corresponding decrease in Communions made by the laity.[2] In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries we find that the receiving of Holy Communion by the ordinary laity was very rare indeed, even members of religious orders and persons of great reputed sanctity only received the Blessed Sacrament four or five times a year. It is also curious to notice, in view of

[1] Aug., Ep. 54, *Ad Januarium*.

[2] Funk, *Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen* I, 298–308.

the earlier custom, that the clergy did not say Mass so frequently as formerly. The Council of Ravenna (1314) laments the fact that many priests never say Mass at all, and orders each priest to say Mass at least once a year. And the provincial Council of Aranda (1473) had to stipulate that the bishops should celebrate Mass at least three times a year.[1] But even in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries signs are not wanting of a desire to return to better ways, as is evidenced by the writings of the mystics Eckhart, Tauler, and others who urged frequent Communion.

In this country, after the Reformation, an attempt was made to induce the laity to communicate more frequently by ordering the minimum obligation of "at least three times in the year" in place of the rule of Easter Communion, which had previously held good. On the Continent a battle royal was soon to be waged on the question. The Jesuits and other theologians had been steadily advocating a return to frequent Communion, and, although their efforts were not entirely without opposition from orthodox Catholics, their chief opponents were the Jansen-

[1] Funk, *Church History*, Vol. II, p. 65. See also Scudamore's *Notitia Eucharistica* (Rivingtons, 1876) for much valuable and interesting information on this subject. I have seen it stated somewhere, if my memory does not play me false, that Hermann, the Prince-Archbishop of Cologne (died 1552), only said Mass once during his episcopate, and that was when he introduced his "Order of Communion" at the cathedral church, but I have searched in vain to find the source of my information.

ists. Antoine Arnauld (1612–94), the famous French Jansenist, strongly objected to frequent Communion, and, in conformity with his peculiar theological tenets, so "fenced the Holy Table" that it was almost impossible for any one to be in a fit state of preparation to receive Communion worthily. It is recorded that under his direction the nuns of Port Royal even omitted Easter Communion, thus passing a whole year without communicating, through reverence for the sacrament.

Extreme views in one direction always produce, by reaction, extreme views in the opposite direction. So it was in this case. Valazquez Pinto maintained that "Obedience to divine law obliges us *to receive Holy Communion every day*, and this doctrine has been expressly taught by S. Jerome, S. Cyril, S. Rupert, S. Bonaventure, S. Justin, S. Cyprian, Paschasius, and many other fathers." And between these two extremes every shade of opinion is expressed in the literature of the period.[1]

But the controversy was by no means futile; it was destined to be productive of much good, and to pave the way to a sane and stable opinion. Throughout the ages there had been wise and moderate theologians and spiritual writers whose calm utterances had been lost amidst the din of controversy; the time had come to listen to them once again. S. Augustine, in the letter previously mentioned, says: "Unworthy reception is when

[1] See Ferreres, *The Decree on Daily Communion* (Sands, 1909).

a man receives when he ought to be doing penance; not when he exercises his free judgement as to approaching or abstaining. But if a man's sins are not so great as to deserve excommunication, he ought not to separate himself from the daily medicine of the Lord's Body."

S. Thomas Aquinas is more cautious in giving his opinion. In answering the question "Whether it is lawful to receive this sacrament daily?" he says that two things must be considered: the first concerns the sacrament itself, since the virtue of it gives health to men it is profitable to receive it daily so as to receive its fruits daily; the second concerns the recipient, who is required to approach the sacrament with the greatest reverence and devotion. If he has the right dispositions he will do well to receive daily. He then concludes: "But because many persons are lacking in this devotion . . . it is not expedient for all to approach this sacrament every day; but they should do so as often as they find themselves properly disposed."[1] The wisdom of the principles thus laid down by the Angelic Doctor no one will deny, but they are too broad to be of much use in individual cases.

S. Francis of Sales gave a very definite rule regarding the reception of Holy Communion which may, I think, be considered to be the general standard required, until recently, by Roman Catholic divines; and our own spiritual writers, in the first instance through the medium

[1] *Summa*, Pars. III, q. lxxx, art. 10.

of Bishop Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, which owes much to S. Francis, have in the main closely adhered to it. The rule is as follows: "To communicate every week it is requisite that we have neither mortal sin nor any affection for venial sin, and have a great desire to communicate. To communicate daily we must, in addition to this, have overcome the greater part of our evil inclinations, and be under the advice of our spiritual father." [1]

In the Roman Church, however, a step further forward was taken so recently as 1905, when Pius X promulgated his important Decree on Daily Communion, the effect of which was entirely to change existing ideas on the subject within the Roman Church, and at the same time to close the controversy. The decree is too long to quote in full,[2] but the substance of it is that a person who is free from mortal sin, and has the purpose of never sinning mortally in the future, may receive Holy Communion daily. It will be seen at a glance that this ruling is of fundamental importance; it is a definite departure from the standard set by S. Francis of Sales, and comes far nearer to what we may suppose were the requirements of S. Augustine.

I do not propose to discuss this decision of the Holy See as it stands; the language in which it is expressed, like the opinion of S. Francis, is

[1] *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Part II, Chap. 20.

[2] The more important clauses are reproduced *in extenso* in my *Manual for Confessors*, p. 142–3.

the language of the Latin Church, and the English mind is slow to appreciate the nice distinctions which the Latin and legal mind draws between mortal and venial sin. Let us rather try to come to the whole question from another, and perhaps to us more familiar, method of approach. The whole problem, as already indicated, revolves around the internal conflict which is set up between our desire to approach the altar and our reverence and sense of personal unworthiness which keeps us away. How are we to solve the difficulty?

May it not be that S. Paul himself, in the very passage in which he warns us of the dangers of an unworthy Communion, gives us the key to the solution of the problem? Just before uttering his warning he says, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come."[1] He thus links up the Holy Eucharist with the Lord's death; the two are intimately connected. "Wherefore," he says, "whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and the Blood of the Lord."[2] This seems to mean that the unworthy recipient is likened to those who caused the Lord's death; he crucifies Him afresh, and puts Him to an open shame. Catholic theology has always seen a close and intimate connection between the Passion of Christ and the Holy Eucharist, and the theories which have been elaborated, both by the Fathers

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 26. [2] Ibid. 27.

and the Schoolmen, to explain the sacrificial aspect of the Mass have been influenced in no small degree by the views held by individual writers regarding the Atonement.

Let us, then, glance for a moment at the doctrine of the Atonement, in the hope that it may shed some light upon the present question. As is well known, there is no one theory of the Atonement which has received the official approbation of the whole Church, there is an absence of that dogmatic definition which we find in the case of the doctrine of the Incarnation, and, in consequence, considerable latitude is allowed for theological speculation. How greatly the theories of the Atonement have varied from time to time, and from age to age, is seen by studying the exhaustive history of the doctrine given in Riviere's *Doctrine of the Atonement*, or in the still more recent Bampton Lectures of Dr. Hastings Rashdall.[1] But I think I am right in saying that, however widely theologians may differ on other points, and however repulsive some of their theories may be to the modern

[1] *The Doctrine of the Atonement*, by J. Riviere, D.D. English translation. (Two Vols. 1909.) *The Idea of the Atonement in Christian Theology*, by H. Rashdall, D.D. (1919). The former sets forth what he considers to be the Catholic teaching on the Atonement, and then traces its development through the ages. The latter also deals with the history of the doctrine, and decides in favour of a modern interpretation of the Abelardian theory. The two books may well be studied together, as the one helps and corrects the other, and both are excellent.

mind—such as the idea of the ransom paid to the devil—all agree in maintaining that the Atonement, whatever other values it may have, is the supreme revelation of the love of God.

And this is the great fact we need to keep in mind here—the central appeal of the Cross is the appeal of Love, and love calls for love; this is the magnetic power of the Cross, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." "So great a pledge of love having been given us," says Peter Lombard, "we too are moved and kindled to love God Who did such great things for us; and by this we are justified, that is, being loosed from our sins we are made just. The death of Christ therefore justifies us, insomuch as through it charity is excited in our hearts." [1] S. Thomas Aquinas, at a little later date, writes that we are delivered from sin by Christ's Passion in three ways: first, because it excites our love; secondly, because it redeemed us; and thirdly, "by way of efficacy, insomuch as Christ's Flesh, wherein He endured the Passion, is the instrument of the Godhead, so that His sufferings and actions operate with divine power for driving out sin." [2]

The great appeal, then, that the Cross makes to us is its revelation of love; no theological knowledge is needed to understand this, for theology belongs to the intellectual side of us, but the call of love springs out of the eternal wells of our

[1] *Sent.* iii, Dist. xix. [2] *Summa*, Pars. III, q. 49, art. 1.

innermost experience. And, as William James has aptly reminded us, "feeling is the deeper source of religion, and philosophic and theological formulae are secondary products, like translations of a text into another tongue." [1]

We now come back again to the relationship of the Sacrifice of the Cross to the Eucharistic Sacrifice. When Leo XIII promulgated his letter on Anglican Orders he denied that we taught a doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and to this charge our Archbishops replied as follows: "First we offer the Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; then, next, we plead and represent before the Father the Sacrifice of the Cross . . . and, lastly, we offer the Sacrifice of ourselves to the Creator of all things, which we have already signified by the oblation of His creatures. This whole action, in which the people has necessarily to take part with the priest, we are accustomed to call the Eucharistic Sacrifice."

We Catholics have reason to be grateful for this explicit and authoritative statement, and it deserves our serious consideration. It rightly emphasizes the latreutic aspect of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and the representation before the Father of the Sacrifice of the Cross. A heart full of praise and thanksgiving is a heart that is of necessity filled with love, and this imperfect love of ours is taken up into and consecrated by the perfect love which was evidenced in the Sacrifice of the Cross. Our religious experience can

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 431.

tell us this without any appeal to intellectual theology.

These thoughts suggest that a solution to the problem of frequent Communion is in sight. The appeal of the Cross and the appeal of the Altar are one and the same; when we have grasped this fact, that it is love in both cases which is calling us, the internal conflict between desire and reverential awe fast tends to disappear. Love calls the penitent as well as the saint, Mary the Magdalene as well as Mary the Mother of the Lord; it comes thus from the Cross, and in like manner it comes from the Altar. Moral Theology rightly lays down rules and distinctions; it is its province so to do; it gives rules as to how dispositions may be tested, and makes nice distinctions between sins mortal and venial; it must because its sphere is intellectual and its object to train spiritual directors in giving counsel and advice. But over and above theology is the test of the individual's personal religious experience, and this breaks through rules and distinctions.

The test of personal experience resolves itself into this: Love is calling from the altar to the soul, what is the response of the soul to this invitation? It is a question every individual can answer in the solitude of prayer; a desire to approach is evidence of love, and "perfect love casteth out fear." Naturally and properly the religious experience of the individual would be submitted to the independent and detached

judgement of the spiritual director, and thus the former would be confirmed by the latter.

Thus, I venture to think, by an independent line of inquiry, we have arrived at the same conclusion as is expressed in different language in the Decree on Daily Communion. True it is that an unworthy Communion crucifies Christ afresh and puts Him to an open shame, but this can only be done of deliberate intention. When love is present in the heart the altar gates are wide open, and Love bids him who would approach fearlessly to go through them.

II

The Fast before Communion

One of the many letters received relating to the problem of the fast before Communion may be quoted as typical of the rest. The writer is a priest, and in the course of his letter he says: "Almost every priest is at one time or another up against this problem; there are persons who, while not being exactly ill, are far too weak to come fasting to Communion, and if they do attempt it they generally faint, and disturb every one else who is present at the service. What are we to say to such people? Are they to be deprived of the Blessed Sacrament just because they cannot receive fasting? Surely it is in accordance with the true spirit of reverence, and the spirit of charity shown by our Lord, to make an exception in cases such as this. I hope

you will deal fearlessly with this perplexing question."

It will be observed that the writer of the letter assumes that the ancient and universal Catholic custom of receiving the Blessed Sacrament fasting is the rule of *Ecclesia Anglicana* ; it is only the exceptional and difficult cases which trouble him. So we will also assume his position as our starting point, and no attempt will be made here to vindicate the principle of the fast before Communion. Let us take for granted, then, that in all ordinary circumstances we are bound by the Catholic law that the Blessed Sacrament can only be received by one who has abstained from all food and drink from the midnight previous to reception. We have now to ask : Does this universal rule admit of any exceptions ?

It is agreed by all Catholic moralists that the law which prescribes fasting Communion is of ecclesiastical and not of divine origin, and consequently admits of exceptions under properly regulated ecclesiastical authority. One such exception is valid beyond all doubt : any person who is in danger of death is exempt from observing the fast ; he then receives the Communion as his Viaticum. Moralists also agree that the following exceptional circumstances make non-fasting Communion valid : When there is grave danger of the Blessed Sacrament being profaned a person may consume It who is not fasting ; when a priest celebrating Mass is suddenly taken ill another priest who is not fasting may complete the

offering of the Sacrifice. Less certain is the opinion that a non-fasting priest may consecrate the Viaticum for a dying person ; and the opinion that a priest may celebrate Mass when he is not fasting in order that the people may fulfil their Sunday obligation. It is generally held by moralists that the latter is not permissible unless there is some other strong reason coupled with it to justify the action.

Until comparatively recent times the above were the only exceptions allowed to the general rule of fasting Communion. In the year 1906, however, the Roman Church made another important and interesting exception, which had its origin in the momentous decree of Pius X regarding daily Communion, which has already been noticed. On December 7, 1906, the Congregation of the Council issued an Instruction which considerably modified previous regulations concerning the Communion of the sick. It may be summarized briefly as follows : Persons confined to their houses by reason of sickness may now receive Communion non-fasting, provided (i) that they have been ill for a month ; (ii) that they have medical evidence of their inability to fast ; (iii) that a speedy recovery is not probable ; (iv) that only liquid food is taken. In religious houses, where Mass is said daily, such Communions may be given once or twice a week, and in private houses once or twice a month.

This decree, of course, has no binding force upon us, yet to what extent it is permissible

for us to avail ourselves of it is, I think, a question to be decided by each individual priest. I must confess that there seems to be a logical case for those who would avail themselves of the decree; we believe ourselves to be a true part of the Catholic Church, and in our present unhappy state of division we may well be allowed to look to the larger part of the Church for guidance and direction. But if such a view is adopted there ought also to be a strict adherence to the definite provisions of the decree; no greater latitude ought to be exercised than the decree allows. It is obvious, of course, that we cannot get the papal dispensation, nor do we require it; but we ought to obtain the permission of the bishop of the diocese, who is the source of our jurisdiction and authority. I refer more particularly to the specific exceptions made in the decree itself, and that the warning is necessary is proved by the fact that certain Roman moralists have already tried to extend the meaning of the decree.

Thus Fr. Ferreres propounds the question: Suppose a person suffering from a chronic disease cannot abstain from food before Communion, but can go to church after taking liquid food, does he come under the intention of the decree? He admits the difficulty in giving a solution to this case, "especially if we consider that there is danger of scandal being given to the faithful when they see a person who has broken the fast prescribed by the Church approaching the

Holy Table." But, nevertheless, he thinks that an affirmative answer may be given, and "that a patient under these circumstances is entitled to share twice a week the privilege of the decree." He continues: "We base our solution on the consideration that the Pope's wishes are that such persons should not be deprived for long of the benefit of Holy Communion, and if they can go to church they may be considered to be comprehended in the case of those who have an oratory at home."[1] I quote this opinion, not because I consider it to have any weight with us, but as an interesting example of how the theologians treat the decree in its practical application.

Our inquiry so far has, I believe, exhausted the exceptions which can be made, with any pretence at all to ecclesiastical authority, to the fast before Communion. And, if I have read my correspondent aright, they do not cover the cases he has in mind. How are we to deal, then, with those persons "who, while not being exactly ill, are far too weak to come fasting to Communion"? I shall make what I believe to be a perfectly valid distinction between those who are really too weak to come fasting to Communion and those who think they are too weak to come fasting to Communion. With regard to the former cases, I would suggest that it is the duty of the priest to communicate them in their own homes about once or twice a month

[1] Ferreres, *Decree on Daily Communion*, p. 134.

from the reserved Sacrament. Surely it is just as much for such persons as these as for the dying that we demand the perpetual reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in our churches. The outstanding event of the last decade in Church life has been the establishment of our right to the reserved Sacrament; where previously one church had perpetual reservation ten now have it. We have won a great victory, and we are profoundly thankful that our efforts have been so wonderfully blessed. But we must look to it that we make a proper use of the privilege we have gained.

It may be objected that my suggestion makes great demands upon the time of busy priests. It most certainly does, and that may be the reason why some of the laity are reluctant to avail themselves of the privilege of receiving Communion from the reserved Sacrament. But I would venture to remind my readers that a priest's first care should be for his sick folk. The more we stand for the principle of the fast before Communion the more ready shall we be to sacrifice our own convenience in order that the faithful may not be led to violate that principle. I know that in many parishes, including my own, there is never a week goes by when the reserved Sacrament is not taken to some sick person or another. The more also the laity demand what is their right, to receive Communion in their own homes when they are too ill to go to church, the more will the

clergy realize the absolute necessity for perpetual reservation.

Finally, we have to consider those cases where persons think they cannot fast. They are by no means uncommon, and are usually confined to the female sex. We can obtain great help in dealing with these cases, I think, from the work which has been done in recent years by certain neurologists. They have established beyond dispute that auto-suggestion develops a "fixed idea" in certain types of people, and causes endless trouble unless it is got rid of. The following case from the clinic of a well-known French neurologist will illustrate what I mean. "A young man, in order to enter upon a certain career, was obliged to go without his early breakfast. Now each time he tried to do without this slight meal he was seized with sensations of hunger which were so acute that they amounted almost to faintness. On analyzing it, it proved to be a case of intense exaggeration of the sensation of hunger, under the influence of purely psychic phenomena. The anxiety which the patient felt lest he be obliged to give up his career by reason of his not being able to change his régime was the only cause of it. It was so entirely the cause that, once the young man was assured of it, he was cured in several days, and could readily accommodate himself to this slight irregularity in his habits of eating."

We clergy all know that young man, but with us he is usually a young woman! Careful

instruction has been given, in preparation for first Communion, that the fast must be strictly kept. Probably this is the first occasion on which the person has gone out of the house without having a cup of tea; she wonders if it will "hurt" her to do so; then comes the strain and excitement of the first Communion, and—she faints. Ever after that she has the "fixed idea" that she is going to faint, and she usually manages to do so! The remedy is indicated by the neurologist quoted above, and not by the suggestion of our correspondent. From personal experience I can testify to its efficacy; and, in addition, I have usually suggested to the patient (for that is what she is) that she should have a good meal on the evening before Communion, and sit during the service, except at the Consecration, and other specially solemn parts of the Service. I do not know if these latter suggestions really tend to dispel faintness, but I am quite sure that their very suggestion helps to get rid of the "fixed idea."

I would suggest, in conclusion, that a wise exercise of reason and discrimination on the part of the priest will solve almost all, if not all, of the so-called hard cases he meets in his parochial work.

CHAPTER XI

Euthanasia—The Right to Die

The average man and ethical theories—The problem of Euthanasia—The solution offered by Dr. Ingleby Oddie and Dr. Reinhardt Rutland—The value of their opinions—Can Euthanasia be considered an advance upon our present mental and moral outlook?—The charge of obscurantism—To legalize Euthanasia would be virtually to sanction suicide—The grounds upon which Euthanasia is to be allowed—The epidemic character of suicide—Difficulties legal and medical—A case quoted.

"It is a brave act of valour to contemn death; but when life is more terrible than death, it is then the truest valour to dare to live."—*Religio Medici.*

THE average man refuses to be bound consistently to any one system of ethical thought; at one time he is a thoroughgoing Intuitionalist, he refuses to admit any exception to his particular moral maxim; under other circumstances he reveals himself as an out-and-out Utilitarian; and under still another set of conditions he will be a Hedonist of the Hedonists; he does the thing just because it pleases him to do it, and for no other reason, although he will refuse, no doubt, to admit the implication even to himself. Perhaps, at bottom,

he is a convinced Pragmatist, although he may never have heard that such a philosophy exists; there is always a temptation for the practical person, and the average man is generally a practical man, to consider that that which "works" is necessarily good and right.

The Christian moralist has always to keep these facts in mind when he is dealing with ethical questions and attempting to persuade the average man that the Christian ethic is the right one. This ethic, because it is the ethic of the Son of God, probes right down into the very heart of things, and lays bare the eternal values which constitute reality; its aim is to establish the proper relationship which should exist, but which does not exist in the mind of the average man, between the "world of experience" and the "world of values."

So the Christian moralist need not be afraid of Pragmatism, he can safely set himself to prove, for the benefit of those he wishes to convince, that the Christian ethic will "work"; but he will not say that it is true because it "works," but rather that it "works" because it is true—which is all the difference.

One of the most perplexing of our moral problems, to the average man, is the question of euthanasia: Why should a person, attacked by a fatal disease which robs him of all enjoyment in life, renders him useless to himself and a burden to others, be denied the right to die?

The Coroner for Marylebone, Dr. Ingleby Oddie, recently answered the question to his own satisfaction. He was holding an inquest upon a man who, suffering from heart disease, had ended his life. The coroner gave as his opinion "that the time might come when, with proper safeguards, doctors might be permitted to exercise that power (i.e. euthanasia). We had not got to that period of civilization yet, but he had no doubt the time would come when painless anaesthesia would be brought about."

There is, of course, nothing new in this statement, the question has been raised again and again, and when it is raised it always comes up fresh and attracts the popular attention. So in the present instance the matter was freely discussed in the secular Press. Dr. Reinhardt Rutland was interviewed by a representative of the *Evening Standard*, and his views are reported as follows: "It is of the highest importance, of course, that the sanctity of human life should be recognized within reasonable limits; but the time has surely come when old-fashioned notions should be cast aside in view of the involuntary cruelty so often perpetrated in prolonging lives that have lost all usefulness to the patients and to those with whom they are associated. . . . I would suggest the establishment of an impartial tribunal, including one or more medical men who had had no previous connection with the case, to adjudicate upon the prolongation of life or the putting to death in all cases when the patient

desires release from suffering—and this independently of the view of relatives."

Before we attempt to discuss the question on its own merits it may be well for us to recognize clearly with what authority these gentlemen speak. They are medical men of good standing and approved learning in their particular science, and on any matters of medicine we should acknowledge their opinion as carrying great weight. But the present question is not one of medicine but of morals; and the opinion of a medical man, as such, carries no more weight than that, say, of a country squire or any other person of good education. We might even be permitted to indulge in a little expostulation. Doctors strongly, and very rightly, resent benevolent but mistaken clergymen prescribing their own pet patent medicine to their patients; may not the moralist, with equal justice, resent the doctor dogmatizing in his particular domain? This is mentioned because it is not sufficiently recognized that the science of morals needs special study and training, as does the science of medicine or law.

It will be noticed that, in both of the opinions quoted, euthanasia is assumed to be an advance upon our present mental and moral outlook. Dr. Oddie says "We have not got to that period of civilization yet" when the practice is possible; and Dr. Reinhardt Rutland asserts that "the time has surely come when old-fashioned notions should be cast aside." Such statements as these

make one wonder if these gentlemen have really given the subject a moment's serious consideration. Euthanasia is no product of advanced modern thought; it is rather a relic of customs which were in vogue at the dawn of civilization; and which have persisted in obtruding themselves in spite of their proved ineffectualness.

What of that custom of our primitive ancestors when the son cheerfully clubbed his aged and decrepit father? We cannot doubt that he justified his action by telling himself that the old gentleman had simply become a burden to himself and to others, and was far better out of the way. What of the practice of infanticide by exposure in the decadent Roman Empire? Plausible arguments were advanced in support of that custom, not only for the State, but also for the child deprived of its life. The practice of euthanasia seems, in fact, to have survived in our own country to so recent a date as one hundred and twenty years ago. Dr. W. Buchan in his *Treatise on Domestic Medicine* (1790) assures us that, at least in the case of hydrophobia, it was the custom in his day to bleed people to death, or to suffocate them, and he strongly condemns the practice. This custom is also referred to by Charles Dickens in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, where Jonas Chuzzlewit, the villain of the story, is reported by another character to have said, in reference to his aged father, "People were sometimes smothered who were bitten by mad dogs . . . and why not help these

lingering old men out of their troubles too?" We must beware of entertaining the delusion that the proposal we are considering is something ultra-modern, advanced, or untried.

Other journalists, when commenting upon Dr. Ingleby Oddie's pronouncement, have suggested that the prejudices of religious obscurantists are the real barriers to this so-called progressive step. Thus, Mr. C. Kennett Burrow, writing in the *Daily Mail*, said "It is, of course, impossible to argue with those who believe that pain is a divinely-ordained purifier of the spirit, and that it should, therefore, be permitted to rack the body till the spirit leaves it." However irritating this statement of the case may be, it admirably illustrates the prevalent idea that the orthodox Christian is beyond the appeal to reason. The Protestant has his final court of appeal: "The Bible says so, therefore it must be true"; so also the Catholic: "*Roma locuta est, causa finita est.*" So far, so good; orthodoxy does recognize authority, and we believe that the moral law is divine; but for that very cause we also believe that it will stand the test of reason, and by that test prove itself to be the best system of ethics. This is the whole *raison d'être* of Catholic moral philosophy as contrasted with moral theology.

Let us, then, apply the test of reason to the present question. It is contended that it would be better to put painlessly to death those who are suffering from an illness that will terminate fatally than to allow them to linger on until they

die. It is an enticing proposal, but it at once brings us up against a hard fact, which I hope to prove later on, that if this permission were given it would cut at the very root of the great ethical principle of the sacredness of human life, a principle which is not only fundamental in the Christian ethic, but also approved by the State law which condemns suicide.

The real point at issue, so it seems to me, is this : euthanasia would make an exception to the general moral law that suicide is of itself evil and sinful. There is always a tendency in the popular mind, when hard cases arise, to endeavour to take a short cut through any law in order that the difficulty may be solved ; it seems easier to sever the knot than to unpick it. But the student of ethics knows full well that such short cuts do not generally solve the difficulty ; on the contrary they often bring with them new dangers which more than outweigh the temporary advantage gained. Now in the present case, since the patient himself is the person who must ultimately decide whether or not he is deprived of life, it is clear that, if he wills to die, he virtually commits suicide. He gives his full consent to the act, and is therefore responsible for it. From this time onwards the difficulties come thick and fast.

We may pass over without comment the significant fact that the interested party is called upon to make this momentous decision at a time when he is suffering great bodily pain,

and is, therefore, in no fit condition to form, or capable of forming, a sound and balanced judgement, and proceed to inquire on what grounds he is to be allowed to commit suicide. It is in order that he may escape from bodily pain and suffering.[1] Now, once we admit this as a sufficient reason for terminating life, we cannot logically and in justice confine it to sufferers of bodily pain. Mental anguish is often far greater than the pains of the body. There are persons who find themselves robbed of everything that makes life to them worth living—honour, position, reputation ; they have come to the end of all things. Why should not they also have the privilege of terminating their existence ?

Then another practical and important question at once arises. At what age is the patient to be considered qualified to give his consent to euthanasia ? Painful and fatal diseases are not the monopoly of persons of mature age. Relatives, we are told, are to have no say in the matter ; obviously such a procedure would open the way to grave abuses. But is a minor to be allowed to give his consent to his own death, and against his parents' wishes ? If he is, there is an utter disregard of parental rights ; if he is not, there is

[1] Throughout this chapter it is necessary to restrict our consideration solely to euthanasia ; to include a discussion of the moral value of giving up one's life for the sake of others would be to introduce an entirely different element into the question.

an act of injustice committed against him on account of his youth. We can safely prophesy that, if euthanasia were permitted, all moral restraint with regard to suicide would be destroyed; and we shall do well to remember that suicide is notoriously epidemic in character; it spreads like smallpox once the moral restraint is broken down. This was sadly but significantly illustrated a few days after Dr. Oddie's *obiter dictum* was published in the Press, for an announcement appeared that a young man, suffering from consumption, having read the report, acted upon the advice and killed himself. Possibly there were other cases which did not have the same publicity.

This chapter is concerned solely with the moral aspect of the question, so I pass over the many legal problems which would arise, and the steps which would have to be taken in order to prevent abuse, fraud, and the satisfaction of personal revenge; I must confess they seem to me to be insurmountable. Two matters, however, may be considered in connection with the question, which our medical readers may confirm or at least criticize. The first is the difficulty of diagnosis. It is by no means always certain, even to the skilled physician or surgeon, that a disease is really what the symptoms would lead one to suppose it to be. There is, for instance, a pseudo-angina pectoris, as well as the true disease; pseudo-diabetes is also known, and in both cases the true disease usually terminates

fatally. Many cases are recorded of hysterical paralysis, in which a patient who has been confined to bed for years will jump up and run out into the open when the house is on fire. In view of the difficulties of diagnosis it would be interesting to know to what extent medical practitioners would be willing to accept the responsibility of advising and performing euthanasia.

Secondly, there is the difficulty of prognosis. How far can one be quite certain that in a particular case the disease will involve great suffering and then terminate fatally? This, again, is a question for the physician, and not for the moralist, to answer. The writer visited a case recently which it may be of interest to record in conclusion. The patient, a man, was suffering from cancer; he had great pain, and a specialist had pronounced that the case was quite hopeless, and would terminate fatally probably in from three to six weeks time. It is thus a typical instance in which euthanasia might well be advised. The writer ministered to the man, instructed him in the elements of the Faith, received his first confession, and gave him Viaticum and Extreme Unction. The man, however, did not die at the end of the time specified, but became much easier, and lived for nearly six months; the pain also decreased in intensity, and was almost entirely absent for the last eight weeks. Just before the man died he said to the writer: "I am truly thankful to God that this illness has brought you to me, for you have taught

me that there is something worth living and dying for. The last six months have been the happiest of my life." What of euthanasia in this case? The incident may not appeal to the materialistic mind, but it meant all the world to that man.

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